THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

NOVEMBER 1961

Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

GEORGE MATTHEWS — THE LABOUR PARTY: FROM SCARBOROUGH TO BLACKPOOL

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN — THE ROOT PROBLEM OF THE UNITED NATIONS

MAURICE DOBB — TRANSITION FROM SOCIALISM TO COMMUNISM: ECONOMIC ASPECTS

DAVID CRAIG — THE GROWTH OF MODERN FICTION

DISCUSSION:

K. G. HARE — ON STAGES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

KITTY CORNFORTH — ON SOCIAL SERVICE STATISTICS

Monthly 1/6

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Marxism Today

Vol. 5 **No. 11**

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37 Grays Inn Road,
London, W.C.1.

Subscription rates
Six issues 10s. 6d.
Twelve issues 21s.

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Editorial Comments

THE document *Signposts for the Sixties* went through the Labour Party Conference with the greatest of ease and will enable Mr. Gaitskell to frame a General Election programme which will ignore the militants and concentrate on winning those sitting on the fence. True, those on the fence are hardly likely to be won over unless they are contacted by active Labour Party workers, particularly those who are inclined to the left. Those workers have been slapped down at Blackpool, and a major problem for the leadership is to get them working enthusiastically at the next General Election.

Signposts for the Sixties is a real hotch-potch, so much so that if one ventures a generalisation as to its character one could be confronted with a number of quotations which would apparently contradict it.

Thus, on page 17 of *Signposts* there is a diatribe about "the giant corporations or private financial empires which dominate so much of the British economy, and which decisively influence its total performance, grow each year larger, fewer and yet more closely interlocked".

This section, which appears to be lifted from a former draft, is not followed up either by widespread proposals for anti-monopoly legislation or for the public ownership of some of the "giant corporations". It leads to little more than a reaffirmation of the policy of renationalising the steel industry.

Despite its many different trends, however, the document is dominantly technocratic. Its main theme is that the problem to be solved is to improve the productive performance of British industry, by the more effective utilisation of science and technique. Once this is done a Labour government, it is said, would find greater scope for bringing about improvements in the social services and the unions would be more able to extract higher wages and shorter hours and valuable fringe benefits from the employers.

This is a universal theme of writers starting from the Fabians and ending in the Bow Group of Tories. Its most recent expression is found in the Penguin Special by Michael Shanks, entitled *The Stagnant Society*. There are various causes of stagnation, according to Mr. Shanks, the most important being the attitude of the trade unions, though the backwardness of certain groups of employers and of the British educational system are also worth mentioning.

We believe that the theme of the stagnation of British capitalism relative not only to the socialist world, but to other capitalist countries, is of considerable importance. Of course British production is lagging behind that of most comparable countries in Western Europe and this is due in some measure to the lower level of investment in industry. Having arrived at this, one plays one's hunch and selects certain surface phenomena at random—employers' backwardness and trade union restrictive practices—and presents them as major causes, and, of course, these things do play some role, if not a major one.

Imperial Glory

But these explanations will not sustain the major fact of the stagnation of Britain in relation to its rivals in the last ten years. We believe that a major explanation will be found in some elements of the economic structure connected with Britain's former imperialist glory.

In the nineteenth century, when London was the dominant financial centre in the world, most foreign currencies were related to gold, which is an indirect way of saying they were related to the pound sterling. It is still a proud boast that 40 per cent of world trade is carried out in sterling. This means that an awful lot of people, all over the world, hold pounds with which they can, if necessary, engage in a bit of highly profitable speculation—a fact which profoundly affects the British capitalist economy.

One could say, for example, that the West German mark is closely linked up with the performance of the West German economy and does not play much of an independent role. There is, however, a sense in which the British pound is affected by influences quite remote from this country. In 1957, for example, it was speculations on the relation between the German mark and the British pound which touched off a run on the pound and forced the British government into taking steps to protect the pound, which it did by undertaking measures which reacted on British production and severely slowed it down. In fact the British capitalist economy was doing relatively well that year, but the measures to protect the pound slowed it down enormously. No such policy was applied by Britain's major competitors.

At the beginning of 1960 it was decided that

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the British economy, which had only begun to recover in the second half of 1959, was rushing ahead too fast, and the government decided to call a halt by imposing a dear-money policy. This policy promoted an inflow of money capital from foreign financial centres paying a lower rate of interest. It was recognised that this "hot money", when it began to flow out again, would begin to create big problems for the British economy, and so an agreement was arrived at under which certain continental banks agreed to support the pound when this happened. This was later followed by a great £536 million loan from the International Monetary Fund for the same purpose. So in order to support the pound the British government puts itself in the hands of foreign banks and of the International Monetary Fund (dominated by the U.S.A.), and those agencies appear to have dictated (in a quite gentlemanly way, of course) the British government's policy towards the British workers and towards the Common Market. And much of this happened because the pound is permanently in a position where adverse speculation is positively invited. The time has surely come for the British people to take a close look at these arrangements.

Our opinion is that there is a complete contradiction between the needs of the British economy and the needs of the financial oligarchies who control London as the world's financial centre. The monetary speculations connected with London have an adverse effect on the development of the British economy. It has been clear for a long time that Britain has not the monetary strength or independence to maintain the role that the pound is expected to play in the world today and, at the same time, take steps to modernise British industry. One of these objectives has to be given up and surely it must be the attempt to keep London as the great financial centre of the world. To maintain this is to blaspheme one of the most esteemed sacred cows in Britain. It is, however, absolutely necessary to do it, and to tell the other monopoly capitalist states that they have got to assume some of the responsibility for the creation of an international currency for the capitalist world through the International Monetary Fund or elsewhere, and that the British people refuse to be frustrated any longer in order to fulfil the vainglorious dreams of the London bankers. It is easier, of course, to pretend that this problem does not exist and blame unofficial strikes for British difficulties.

Vanished Surplus

It is one of the well-worn themes of bourgeois economics that a country's ability to export capital is based on the balance of payments surplus earned in transactions with the outside world. In 1960, however, Britain had a balance of payments deficit, yet British firms, according to the *Board of Trade Journal* of October 7th, invested £247 million abroad, mostly in the old Dominions (Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand), very little going to the underdeveloped Dominions. Such transactions can only be made possible (1) if the gold and dollar reserves are drawn upon, or (2) if loans are received from abroad.

It was the inflow of "hot money" that enabled the export of capital to take place at all; then the support of European bankers had to be solicited in order to protect the pound, when the hot money flowed out again, and then the International Monetary Fund had to make a £536 million loan in order to replace the effort of the bankers. So, in fact, the investments of British industry abroad were in the last analysis financed by the International Monetary Fund. What is behind this craziness? The fact is that everywhere in the Dominions (old and new) British imperialism is competing against U.S. influence, and to hold the Dominions together it has to encourage the investment of British capital and the desperate expedients described above enable this to be done. But when this crazy type of policy produces difficulties, the general attitude of expert commentators is not to ask whether it ought to be done in this way, but to indulge in the usual hackneyed diatribes against the workers.

Old Lady Thinks Again

Last year, in 1960, Britain in its transactions with the outside world earned the quite enormous sum of £5,736 million. But it paid more out to the outside world. Were all these payments really necessary?

One of them was £218 million for overseas military expenditure (half of which was for expenditure in West Germany). No other capitalist country has to make a similar expenditure, with the exception of the United States of America, which has enormous currency reserves in contrast to the United Kingdom's lack of reserves. West Germany has no such expenditure, and France, which spends a lot in Algeria, does so in a country which is part of the French economy.

What does this transaction mean? We have all heard the well-known assertion that exports are necessary to pay for imports. But this transaction means that no less than £218 million of the exports of Britain are necessary to pay for the upkeep of the British army in foreign countries.

The fact that this is utter nonsense has pene-

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trated the Bank of England. The new Governor, the Earl of Cromer, addressing the City of London bankers' and merchants' dinner, on October 5th, said:

> "Is perhaps the high level of government expenditure overseas not perhaps based more on our imperialist past than tailored to our changing position in the world, or the need to confine financially unremunerative expenditure to what, as a nation, we are prepared to earn overseas."

As for the services which are used to protect the pound from time to time, the Earl, while saying that he endorsed Selwyn Lloyd's immediate measures as a necessity, went on to say:

> "I would, however, not be true to my own convictions if I did not state it is my firm belief *that constant recourse to disproportionate use of monetary measures* is no substitute for a consistent and appropriate national economic policy" [italics ours].

So our advice is: look to the imperialist structure and the policies adopted to sustain it as the cause of Britain's stagnation and cut out cheap *ad hoc* explanations, particularly those which blame the unions.

Above all, cut out statements that the British economy must produce more when it is evident that the whole imperialist structure in which it moves is preventing it from producing more.

Miners' Eisteddfod

For fourteen years now the National Union of Mineworkers, South Wales Area, has sponsored annually a "Miners' Eisteddfod" in Porthcawl. What is the character of this event? Is it only one more Eisteddfod or does it differ from the others, and, if so, in what way?

The conditions for entry and lavish money prizes follow the usual lines of Welsh competitive music festivals, except that there is one competition, that for male voice choirs, in which the "competing choirs must contain 50 per cent of miners engaged in the mining industry", to quote from the official programme. There is also an "open" male voice choir competition with no such qualification. In the event, the 50 per cent miners' competition attracted the largest number of competitors; twelve choirs competed, one of which came from the Kent coalfield, with a membership ranging from thirty to eighty singers. The President of the National Union of Mineworkers, South Wales Area, addressed the audience and made an important reference to peace and to the West German troops at Castlemartin. There was a musical composition competition for Welsh composers; this was an attempt to help the introduction of new items into the male voice choir repertoire, a field in which innovation is sorely needed but where tradition is very strongly entrenched.

These differences from the other Eisteddfods may seem comparatively small, but they are significant. Furthermore, during a period when many competition festivals are suffering from diminishing entries, this Miners' Eisteddfod attracts more entries in the choral sections every year. The standard is rising in the Ladies' and Mixed Choirs' classes. Mixed choirs have always been a weak spot in Welsh choral singing. This year there were two splendid mixed choirs among a group of six; one was a comparatively newly formed choir with a high percentage of young women and young men, with a young woman as its conductor. The fact that two male voice choirs were also conducted by women showed the wind of change blowing through the Welsh valleys.

Without a systematic study of the general social conditions in South Wales, it would not be correct to attribute these welcome signs of expansion and development solely or even largely to the existence of the Miners' Eisteddfod. But there can be no doubt that the intervention of the Trade Union movement in this department of the cultural field is having a revitalising effect, and its potential influence in bringing art nearer to a true expression of social life cannot be overestimated.

Cuba Si! Yanks No!

One of the hallmarks of all truly popular revolutions is the struggle to abolish illiteracy, to open to the people the road to education. In the early days that followed the October Revolution this was one of the great tasks of the Communist Party. This has been, too, one of the first tasks and great triumphs of the Chinese Revolution. Already in the midst of the cruel anti-Japanese war in the middle thirties tens of thousands of students were pouring into the countryside to bring to the peasantry their first lessons in reading and writing. Amidst the cruel Japanese bombardments the slogan was "let every cave become a schoolroom and the air-raid siren the sound of the schoolroom bell!"

The first two in the Friday night TV series of the Granada Network *Cuba Si! Yanks No!* were a rare and magnificent piece of reporting. Perhaps the most moving was the second that vividly described the work of the students of Cuba who have suspended for a period their own studies to fight illiteracy throughout the island. Fidel Castro has made a call that *in one year* the back of illiteracy should be broken (there are over 3 million illiterates as a legacy of imperialist rule).

The Granada documentary showed us the youth teaching workers and peasants to read and write,

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showed us young people teaching their parents and their grandparents. It showed us, too, the first textbook *Venceremos* ("we shall conquer"), spelling out in big letters not C-A-T spells cat but the slogans of the Cuban revolution.

Now we have received a welcome and fascinating gift from Havana. It is the new textbook *Cumpliremos* ("We Shall Accomplish"), not now for first beginners, but for those who have learned to read and write. Some 150,000 copies had already been printed by the end of June. In simple language with graphic illustrations *Cumpliremos* sets out the essentials of the Cuban revolution —who were the reactionaries and imperialists who ruled Cuba; the story of the revolution; the land reform and the beginnings of co-operative farming; the plans for the industrialisation of the island; the tasks of building socialism.

The letter that accompanies the book is dated August 21st, 1961—*Año de la Educacion* (Year of Education). It bears the motto of José Martí, the great founder of the Cuban national liberation movement: "Every man on this earth has the right to receive education; and in return, has the duty to contribute to the education of others". Now, as part of the socialist revolution, Martí's dream will be fulfilled in the island, and Cuba will become the first country of Latin America to abolish illiteracy.

Lenin's "Philosophical Notebooks"

This month will see the publication for the first time in the English language of Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*. They will be published as Volume 38 of *Lenin's Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 7s. 6d.), five volumes of which have already appeared.

Lenin read very widely in philosophy, and was in the habit of making marginal notes in the books that he read as well as various additional manuscript notes. All these have been preserved, and were first published in the U.S.S.R. as Volumes 9 and 12 of the *Lenin Miscellanies* in 1929-30. In 1933 they were first brought together in one book under the title of *Philosophical Notebooks*. Their publication had a deep effect at the time, as they proved very relevant to controversies about dialectics and mechanistic materialism, which were taking place in the thirties in the Soviet Union.

No one interested in Marxist philosophy can afford to ignore these notes, and we have been handicapped all these years by not having them in English. But they were not, of course, written for publication—they were simply Lenin's own personal jottings. This makes them, in many instances, hard to read, but they are extraordinarily fruitful and suggestive. No one should *begin* the study of Marxist philosophy with the *Philosophical Notebooks*, but no one who has a grasp of these essentials will fail to find them immensely stimulating.

Most of the notes concern German books some of which are, today, of no more than historical interest. Perhaps the sections of the *Notebooks* which readers will find most rewarding are the fifty pages on Hegel's *Science of Logic*, and the twenty pages on Feuerbach's *The Essence of Religion*. Along with these should be studied the ten pages *On the Question of Dialectics*, which is the only item in the *Notebooks* which does not consist of notes on other books.

Lenin made the various notes contained in this volume over a period of twenty years, from 1895-1916. It is interesting that the bulk of them, including those on Hegel's *Logic*, were made in 1914-16. In these years of the First World War Lenin evidently devoted a great deal of attention to questions of dialectics.

Eight Millimetres

While to the accompaniment of much publicity the size of film shown in cinemas has been getting larger, developments in the opposite direction for the specialised use of film have also been taking place. Most laymen know that the established width for cinema films is 35 mm.; the public has been made aware of such technical advances as Technirama and may have guessed that "Grandeur 70" might have something to do with a wider film. Greater clarity of the picture as well as a larger picture have been the demands, and some of the achievements by the processing laboratories in achieving greater definition have, incidentally, been of use in the expansion of the use of the smallest gauge 8 mm. home movies.

Cheap cameras and projectors for 8 mm. have, however, been the key to the popularity today of 8 mm. as opposed to 16 mm. and 9.5 mm., which have long been the vogue in the amateur market. Home movies in general are now within the range of a far greater proportion of the population than ever before, and as an indication of this rapid growth is the fact that one magazine catering for home movies (*Amateur Cine World*) after many years as a monthly, went over to fortnightly publication and very soon afterwards became a weekly.

Until recently, the baby of the amateur gauges —8 mm.—has been silent. But the development of the use of magnetic sound recording, where the sound instead of being visible on a portion of the film is recorded and reproduced with far higher fidelity on a magnetic "stripe" along the edge of the film, has opened up the technical

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possibility of 8 mm. sound films as well. Again, the key is in the equipment, but here the advances have not yet been so great. While silent 8 mm. projectors can be bought in the £30 to £40 price range, sound projectors are upward of £150. These sound projectors also enable the keen amateur movie-maker to record his own music and voices on the film, but only four makes—two American and two Italian—are at present on the market in Britain. In its technical review of these four machines, *Cine Camera* (a monthly), implied a considerable lag in the development of 8 mm. sound projectors by sub-titling its article, "Movies for people with Ears".

There are indications that at least one of the foreign manufacturers of this sound equipment is to introduce a new sound model at a drastically reduced price, in order to be nearer the price range of the silent machines. The days are ended when only the stereotype rich American tourist was the one seen with a small movie camera; it is now an international hobby with cameras being manufactured in Britain, both Germanys, Austria, Japan and the Soviet Union amongst others. (Some six 8 mm. cameras and two silent projectors were on display at the recent Soviet Exhibition in London, and negotiations were soon initiated for the importation into Britain of some of them.)

Whatever may happen over sound films, there are great potentialities for the specialised use of silent 8 mm. films in the field of education and publicity. In the United States of America Technicolor have been instrumental in developing a cheap and compact projector that can take magazines of up to about three minutes of silent film; these magazines can be changed in a matter of a few seconds, and the film is made into a continuous loop, so that it does not have to be directly handled at all by the operator. Teachers do not always want a whole lesson recorded on film and running at a predetermined pace that may inhibit the all-important teacher-child relationship.

Of far greater use to a teacher is a "visual aid" in the form of a short piece of film that illustrates one point, and which he can introduce exactly where he wants to in his lesson and for as long or as short a time as he judges to be right. In America, the Technicolor "800" projector with magazine-loading retails for under 90 dollars, (about £30), and it is estimated that each little film in its casette would cost not more than the price of a text-book. The portability, compactness and ease of operation make such equipment of ideal use to the salesman, and, used imaginatively, also by political, trade union and other bodies for factory gate or canteen illustrations of a speaker's points in lively visual terms.

Soviet Studies of the Chartist Movement

Soviet historians have always shown the greatest interest in the Chartist movement and have contributed a number of valuable studies to the literature of Chartism. A few years ago English readers were able to benefit from the *Anthology of Chartist Literature*—the first compilation of Chartist poetry, extracts from novels, and literary criticism, which was published (in English) in Moscow in 1956 and distributed in this country by Central Books.

Since then work has continued. A number of popular booklets has been published, there have been some lively discussions in the Soviet historical press (particularly in *Modern and Contemporary History*), and, now, the Institute of History (part of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.) has published a collective work by a number of Soviet historians, *Chartism—a Collection of Essays*, edited by V. M. Lavrovski, V. E. Kunina and B. A. Rojkov. They have been able to base their work on the magnificent collection of Chartist books, periodicals and documents in the archives of the Marx-Engels Institute.

Amongst the essays is an attempt at a historiography of the Chartist movement, which includes the writings of Marx and Engels on Chartism and also lists the main Russian studies. There is an essay on the sources used by Engels to prepare his *Conditions of the Working Class in England in* 1844. Other essays include a "History of the National Charter Association", "The Chartist and the Anti-Corn Law League in 1842", "Chartism in 1848", "The Chartists and the Electoral Campaign of 1852", and "Ernest Jones on the Colonial Question". The best essay is an interesting study on the literary-criticism and aesthetic views of the Chartists.

It is strongly to be hoped that language is not permitted to remain a barrier and that it is found possible to translate these studies into English as soon as possible.

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The Labour Party: from Scarborough to Blackpool

George Matthews

WHEN Richard Crossman opened the Sixtieth Annual Labour Party Conference at Blackpool on October 2nd he sounded a note previously heard in that same hall just under two years before.

Then Aneurin Bevan, at the two-day conference held after Labour's third successive election defeat, made a winding-up speech which many people felt saved the day for a discredited Gaitskell. Bevan's theme was the need to meet "the challenge of communism". He pushed aside the threat from the Tories, who, he declared, were no longer important. It was the socialist countries which were the real challenge, and Labour had to prove that it could do better.

This was certainly a tribute to the gigantic successes of the socialist countries under the leadership of the Communist Parties. But it also reflected the fatal anti-communism of so many Labour leaders. It depicted the socialist countries not as allies and friends in the world advance to socialism but as a threat. It presented the main job of the British Labour movement not as defeating the Tories, overwhelming capitalism and establishing socialism, but as trying to "beat the Communists".

Bevan got a big response to his speech in 1959. But this year when Crossman quoted him the passage fell completely flat. This was not only because though the words were Bevan's, the voice was Crossman's. It was also because in the light of the events of the past two years, the argument had a curiously outdated ring.

It sounded very odd in 1959 to brush the Tories aside as unimportant, when they had just defeated Labour for the third time. It sounded even odder in 1961, after two more years of Tory rule and in the midst of the Tory attack on wages and living standards announced by Selwyn Lloyd's July budget.

As for the Soviet Union, so great has been its further progress in every field in the past two years, and so breathtaking are the prospects opened out by the new twenty-year plan, that most thinking Labour people are more likely to ask "what has been wrong with our leaders and our policy, and what can we learn from the Russians?" than to think "we must rally round Mr. Crossman, Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Brown to beat the wicked Communists".

Besides, since Blackpool in 1959, there had also been Scarborough in 1960. The right wing there had been defeated on the crucial issue of their foreign and nuclear policy.

The Right-Wing Grip

Their grip on the Labour Party, maintained for so long, had been severely shaken. They had responded by a counter-offensive against the decisions of their own conference, conducted with a viciousness, venom, unscrupulousness and ruthlessness which had appalled and shocked many Labour Party members who did not realise how far the right-wing leaders would go in the effort to maintain their domination.

Thus many of the delegates were sadder and wiser than they had been either in 1959 or 1960. After the in-fighting in which the right had indulged, these delegates were in no mood to listen to appeals for unity behind a right-wing policy on the ground that this was necessary to win the next election and "meet the challenge of communism".

The issue now was how far the right wing had succeeded in its efforts to reverse the trend shown at Scarborough. Had it reasserted its former domination? Had it decisively defeated the left? Was the left demoralised and dispirited?

Before the conference most Fleet Street commentators answered "yes" to these questions. They said the left had been routed by Gaitskell and had "given up the ghost".

But after the conference it is clear that the answer to all these questions is "no".

It is quite true that the Scarborough decisions were reversed, with a two-and-a-half to one vote against the Transport Workers' resolution this year. This is a serious setback for the left and for the struggle for peace.

But against it has to be set the defeat of the platform on the issue of Polaris bases by a

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majority of 872,000 and on the issue of West German bases by a majority of 786,000. These are key issues. They strike at the root of the NATO nuclear strategy. They contradict the official line put forward in the joint Labour Party-T.U.C. statement "Policy for Peace". On these questions the right wing fought fiercely. But they were defeated. Their grip was not reimposed.

Prior to the conference the right-wing leaders had also taken steps to try to behead the left. They had expelled the Electrical Trades Union, whose vote would obviously have been added to those supporting the progressive resolutions. They had excluded six of the principal spokesmen of the left in the Parliamentary Labour Party, including Michael Foot. Through the so-called "Campaign for Democratic Socialism" they had made a tremendous effort to win constituency Labour Parties for support of the Gaitskell line. At the conference they made great play with the argument that it was time to stop the discussion on nuclear policy and unite in preparation for the next General Election.

In these circumstances, the significance of the vote on Polaris and West German bases is even greater. It is also remarkable that, according to a number of commentators who are in general sympathetic to Gaitskell, more constituency parties voted against his nuclear policy at Blackpool than at Scarborough.

The votes for the constituency section of the National Executive also showed that the "Campaign for Democratic Socialism" miserably failed in its efforts to clear off the executive those regarded by the constituency parties as the lefts.

These facts justify the mood of confidence and optimism with which most of the left delegates left Blackpool. They refute the picture which the press, radio and TV in general tried to present, of a Gaitskell who had completely routed all his opponents and was now in supreme and undisputed control.

A Stage in the Struggle

Blackpool registered the stage which has been reached in the struggle between the left and the right.

The right was able to recover some of the ground it lost at Scarborough. But it could not reassert its former domination and control. The trend to the left in the movement is a permanent one. It may suffer setbacks. The forward movement will not be smooth and uninterrupted. But the right cannot reverse the trend.

One or two of the more sober press comments recognised that the "Gaitskell victorious: Cousins routed" headlines were a superficial and incorrect summing-up of the conference results. Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph* (8.10.61) wrote:

> It seems to me that a Pyrrhic victory such as Mr. Gaitskell gained last week could prove more dangerous than any defeat, since it is likely to encourage confidence in the winner without really adding to his strength.

He added that:

> The tragic irony of Mr. Gaitskell's victory is that he has probably succeeded in promoting himself as a classless leader just when the class war may be about to begin again; that he has succeeded in destroying the working class image of the Labour Party just when it might be most advantageous to preserve it.

This is a very important outcome of Blackpool, since the pre-requisite for a successful fight-back against the right-wing attack is a feeling of confidence that it can succeed. If the greatest danger after Scarborough was complacency and an underestimation of the right wing, the greatest danger after Blackpool is defeatism and an overestimation of the strength of Gaitskell and his colleagues.

There is thus no reason for pessimism and defeatism on the left. At the same time there needs to be a serious and self-critical examination of why the right did succeed in defeating the Scarborough policy. It is necessary to learn some lessons from the events of the past year and the proceedings of Blackpool. Otherwise it will not be possible to carry forward effectively the struggle for a policy of peace and socialism.

First, there needs to be a more effective reply to some of the arguments of the right wing.

In their defence of their nuclear strategy George Brown and Gaitskell returned again and again to a number of key points. They also engaged in the most unscrupulous demagogy. The foundation on which their whole case rested was that the Soviet Union is the enemy. Without the slightest attempt to prove it, they asked the delegates to assume that the Soviet Union was planning aggression. On this false assumption they then erected an immense structure of arguments about the need for the "deterrent", for "collective security" and for the need to maintain "the balance of power".

Destroy the slanderous claim that the Soviet Union threatens us, and you knock away the foundation of the right-wing case. This is why to explain again and again the peace policy of the Soviet Union, and to refute the Tory and right-wing lies, is an essential part of the struggle for peace. Not only the Communists, but the left

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as a whole, need to understand this. To fail to do it, to retreat in face of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, to take the "middle way" and "impartially" blame both the Soviet Union and the United States for the danger of war, simply plays into the hands of the right wing.

"Collective Security"

But it is not enough to explain the peace policy of the socialist states. It is also necessary to show where the danger of war really comes from. When Gaitskell and Brown tried to justify NATO on the grounds that Labour had always stood for "Collective Security", and when they invoked the memory of Munich and the betrayal of Czechoslovakia to justify Western policy over Berlin, they were standing history on its head. To describe NATO as "Collective Security" is as ridiculous as if Hitler had called the anti-Comintern Pact "Collective Security".

The phrase was coined to describe collective action for peace, in which all countries could take part through the League of Nations, to deter aggression.

NATO is a sectional military alliance, with aggressive aims, to which the Soviet Union has been refused admission, and which was set up in contravention of the United Nations Charter.

As for Munich, its lesson is exactly the opposite of that now drawn by Gaitskell. It was the culmination of the Chamberlain policy of encouraging the revival of German militarism against the Soviet Union. Today the Tory government and Gaitskell are carrying out the same policy. But this time they are going further. They are doing what Chamberlain never dared to do—giving German militarism bases on British soil. Their crime is greater than Chamberlain's, not only because they betray those who died in the Second World War, but because now German militarism, with the backing of the United States militarists, is preparing for a thermo-nuclear war.

Czechoslovakia is certainly in danger today—but not from the German Democratic Republic or the Soviet Union. She is threatened by exactly the same forces which menaced her in 1938 and 1939—the German militarists, who are again talking of the need to "liberate" the Sudetenland.

This fact makes all the more hypocritical the claim of Gaitskell and Brown that Britain should not renounce the nuclear strategy because it would mean that West German militarism would dominate NATO. It is almost unbelievable that those responsible for forcing the policy of West German rearmament through the British Labour movement in the early 1950's should now have the colossal impudence to use it as a weapon against those who opposed them then and still oppose them today.

It cannot be too often stressed that NATO is not the means of restraining or controlling West German militarism. It is the means by which the West German militarists are being rearmed. It is they who in fact increasingly control NATO. Already they have General Heusinger as Chairman of the key NATO Military Standing Committee in Washington, and Speidel as Commander of NATO Land Forces in central Europe.

Action for Peace

But it is not only necessary to refute the arguments of the right wing—it is essential to step up every form of action for peace and bring the Labour movement increasingly into the struggle. Gaitskell and his colleagues will try to sabotage the Conference decisions on Polaris and West German bases. They have already made that clear. A great effort is needed to compel them to operate the Blackpool policy on these issues.

Equally urgent is the need to rally the movement behind the slogan "No War over Berlin". That this slogan expressed the feelings of the great majority of delegates was demonstrated in the ovation given to Mr. Shinwell when he concluded his speech with it. But Mr. Gaitskell repudiated it in his reply. The emergency resolution on Berlin which was passed by the Conference did speak of the need for negotiations, for a measure of de facto recognition of the German Democratic Republic, for recognition of the existing frontiers of Germany, and for a nuclear-free zone in Europe (although it also contained an unjustified attack on the socialist countries and made no reference at all to the threat from West German militarism). But nothing will be done by the right wing to resist the provocative moves of the West German rulers and their British and American backers, unless the pressure of the rank-and-file compels action.

"Made in America"

Gaitskell hardly bothered, in fact, to conceal that right-wing policy is largely "made in America". Just before last year's joint Labour Party-T.U.C. statement on defence was published George Brown went to America. When he came back he was asked: "How does the new statement fit in with any new thinking in the Pentagon?" He replied that he was "quite surprised and struck by how much it did fit in. There was a good deal of thinking there along the Labour Party's line." No doubt many Labour Party members were

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"quite surprised and struck" to discover that the "peace" policy of their leaders fitted in so well with the plans of the wild men in the Pentagon.

This year Gaitskell went to America before the 1961-model joint defence statement was drawn up, and talked to Kennedy for two hours. When he came back he said:

> "I was very impressed with the talks I had with Mr. Kennedy. I found him highly intelligent, well-informed, alert, practical, very much on the ball, open-minded without being cynical, quick, a man of great competence, I would say."

Shortly after this panegyric of Kennedy, the U.S. organised the invasion of Cuba, and for a while Gaitskell restrained himself from indulging in public eulogies of the President. But at Blackpool he gave the game away once more. He finished his reply to the defence debate by boasting of the similarity between Labour's policy and that of Kennedy.

Since the U.S. Administration not only organised the invasion of Cuba, but has this year stepped up the arms race, increased military expenditure by nearly £2,000 million, called up over 150,000 reservists, sent 40,000 more men to Europe, given the West Germans more nuclear arms, established the Polaris base in Britain and threatened nuclear war over Berlin, many delegates felt that this was the most effective condemnation of Gaitskell's policy which could possibly be uttered.

The leadership's attitude to NATO, West Germany and the United States also conditioned its approach to the Common Market. There should have been forthright condemnation of the Tory plans to bring Britain into this association of what Lord Attlee has called "the worst reactionaries in Europe."

Instead, George Brown made it clear that he and Gaitskell are in favour of going in, while trying to avoid a clearcut vote on the issue in the Conference. In the event a resolution supporting immediate entry was overwhelmingly defeated, a resolution opposing entry was remitted, and the composite resolution supported by the Executive, which demands various guarantees before entry, was carried.

In the whole conference there were very few references to the connection between the nuclear policy, the huge arms expenditure, and the Tory attacks on wages and the social services. One of the few speakers who referred to it was Frank Cousins, who pointed out that it was impossible to spend 12½ per cent of the national income on arms and not expect it to affect the standard of living of the workers.

This failure to relate foreign to home policy gave an air of unreality to much of the discussion on the home policy statement of the National Executive Committee—*Signposts for the Sixties*.

Abandonment of Clause 4

But many of the delegates also failed to understand the real purpose of this policy document. As the *Daily Worker* pointed out on the day after the debate, when Gaitskell was defeated on his effort to remove Clause 4 from the Labour Party constitution "he made it perfectly plain that he would act as if it were in fact no longer there". *Signposts for the Sixties* is the embodiment of Gaitskell's determination to abandon Clause 4 in practice even if he had to leave it in the constitution.

The same point was made by *The Times* (4.10.61) when it said:

> "Mr. Gaitskell's machinations against Clause 4, though defeated in form, have been carried in substance a fair way towards success."

Gaitskell made his position quite clear in response to a challenge from Frank Cousins, who said:

> "We either believe in the extension of public ownership to make the economy work for us, or we don't, and I think that our leaders should say quite clearly to the country that we do."

At this, Gaitskell, with an air of pained surprise, implied that Cousins could not have read *Signposts*. Anyone who had, said Gaitskell, must see that it advocated an extension of public ownership. But when he himself came to the specific proposals all he could give as definite examples of Labour's intentions were the proposals to renationalise iron and steel and commercial road transport, together with the suggestion of a Land Commission to take over the freehold of land required for building. But no one expected even Gaitskell and his colleagues to have the nerve to suggest that the Tories should be allowed to get away with the denationalisation they carried through after 1951. And as for the Land Commission proposals, they are just about as far removed from genuine land nationalisation as Gaitskell is from being a Socialist.

There were also, said Gaitskell, six other ways of extending public ownership, which Wilson had dealt with in his opening speech. Alas, these, too, when examined, turn out to be a snare and a deception. No proposals whatever are made to nationalise the existing giant monopolies which dominate the economic life of Britain. Only if further mergers take place is there the suggestion that the state should intervene.

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The six points boil down to proposals for state participation in some industries (which could well be a device for putting public money into them while the private owners get the profits); and allowing existing nationalised industries to make the machinery and equipment they need.

This is very far from the radical extension of nationalisation which is needed if the monopolists are to be curbed, the "commanding heights" occupied by the people, and the economy successfully planned. Cousins was absolutely right to challenge the platform on this, and to support a resolution asking for an investigation into industries which could be taken into public ownership, with a report on them to be presented to the next Conference. This resolution was defeated by 2,453,000 for to 3,759,000 votes against. But if the A.E.U. vote had been cast in accordance with National Committee policy and the decision of the delegation at Blackpool the resolution would have been carried and the platform defeated.

In opening the discussion, Harold Wilson argued that to get Britain out of the difficulties caused by Tory policy great sacrifices would be necessary and great burdens would have to be imposed on the people.

It was necessary to have a Labour government because only such a government would be able to persuade the people that they should accept these sacrifices and burdens. It would do so by showing its impartiality—it would be equally strong in attacking recalcitrant businessmen and unofficial strikers.

This was also Gaitskell's theme when he replied to the debate. You could not have expansion without planning, he said. But as Labour was "democratic" and not "dictatorial" the planning could not be compulsory. It could only be done by co-operation, and the co-operation could not be achieved unless all were "united by a sense of fair play." Again and again he repeated that "we can only do these things by persuasion."

A remarkable light was thrown on his thought processes by the reply he gave to a point made by Cousins on the government subsidy to the Cunard Company. Cousins argued that if public money was being given to Cunard it should be publicly owned. Gaitskell replied that the government was only giving part of the money needed. You could not, he said, ask for full control when only giving part of the money—the company would turn you down!

After this it was not surprising to hear him talk about "achieving the classless society without a class war."

Unfortunately, the Executive, on the whole, got away with its social service policy as set out in *Signposts for the Sixties*. There was criticism on certain issues—such as the dropping of the 1956 demand for the municipalisation of privately owned rented houses—but no serious fight developed. In view of the weaknesses of these social service proposals and their failure effectively to challenge the Tory attack on the social services, this was an unsatisfactory feature of the conference.

There was also considerable confusion on the role of British imperialism in relation to the colonies and former colonies, and the role played by imperialism in the Congo.

The line of *Signposts*—that "the transformation of a white Empire into a multi-racial Commonwealth, begun by the Labour government in Asia, has been continued by the Conservatives"—was not effectively challenged. As with the Tories, the emphasis was put on "economic aid"—which in practice means mainly capitalist investment and military expenditure—rather than on immediate independence for the colonies which have not yet achieved it, and genuine help—without political strings—in the industrialisation of the former colonies.

Campaign Needed

One of the great needs following on Blackpool is a big campaign of explanation throughout the whole Labour movement, with the object of clearing up confusion and showing the need for mass pressure to save peace and defend the living standards of the people.

After Scarborough an immense propaganda campaign in support of the right wing was mounted in the capitalist press and on the radio and television. This will happen again. The only way to counter it is for the left and the militants to go direct to the workers with their political case. Here the role of the *Daily Worker* is of the greatest possible importance.

Meetings in the factories and at the factory gates, discussions in the trade union branches and local Labour Parties, the sale of pamphlets and the distribution of leaflets, the organisation of public meetings—all these and many other ways can be found of reaching the people.

Renewed efforts are also needed to bring together all the left forces behind an agreed policy dealing with the key foreign and home policy issues. It is not enough to fight the right-wing efforts at disruption—it is also necessary for the left to make positive efforts towards unity.

Here the trade union movement can play a

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vital part. There is now far less of a tendency to regard the trade unions as a permanent source of strength for the right wing. The arduous and patient work of Communists and others in the unions over a period of many years has now made important advances. The main force in defeating the right wing is, and will continue to be, the development of left thought in the unions and the winning of more unions for a left policy. The trade union delegates to the constituency Labour Parties can also exercise great influence in winning them for a policy of peace and social advance.

As this autumn's industrial struggles develop, the left forces in the Labour Party, including in the Parliamentary Party, have a great opportunity to get closer to the workers engaged in the struggle for wages and jobs. The gap between the "industrial" and "political" wings must be closed, and full support given to every action of the workers in defence of their standards.

Most important and urgent of all is the need to increase every form of public activity for peace. The national lobby of Parliament which took place on October 18th should be followed by pressure on every individual M.P. by resolutions and deputations from organisations in the constituencies. Support should be given to the British Peace Committee's conference in November. Greater efforts should be made to unify the peace movement and its activities, and guard against the dispersion of effort.

The crucial issues are Berlin, the Polaris and West German bases, and the need to achieve complete and general disarmament.

The Communist Party

In drawing conclusions from the Conference the left needs also to see what is involved in fighting the right wing. The expulsion of the E.T.U. was only one example of the way in which the leaders trample on democracy when it suits them. They also succeeded in preventing any discussion of the withdrawal of the whip from the five M.P.s, although at the opening session a pledge was given that the matter would be discussed.

By the tremendous storm of booing with which delegates greeted Charles Pannell's notorious remark "show me a Communist and I'll show you a crook" they demonstrated their opposition to these McCarthyite witch-hunting tactics. On a show of hands, indeed, it is probable that the expulsion of the E.T.U. would have been defeated. This is a welcome recognition of the need to fight the disruptive tactics of the right. But it now urgently needs to be carried forward in the struggle to end all bans and proscriptions in the Labour movement.

No one can doubt that the left effort would be far stronger if there was a greater degree of unity. Just because they realise this the right are determined to maintain the bans and continue the policy of division.

Before the Conference began Mr. Sidney Silverman, M.P., referred self-critically to the weaknesses of the left since Scarborough and its failure to fight back sufficiently hard against the right-wing counter-attack. He might also have mentioned the element of disorientation which entered in at a crucial moment, when the Crossman-Padley "compromise" proposals on nuclear policy were welcomed by a section of the left.

It was the Communist Party which pointed out that these proposals were not a bridge to unite the movement, but a device to split the left and assist Gaitskell—and how correct that analysis proved to be!

This is only one example of the need for the clarity and firmness which a Party basing itself on the principles of scientific socialism brings to the Labour movement. Last Easter the Communist Party Congress declared that unity of the left was needed to throw back the right-wing counter-offensive after Scarborough. It pointed to the urgent need to strengthen the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* as the basis for the development of such unity.

Blackpool was a remarkable confirmation of the correctness of the Congress decisions. It was impossible to listen to the debates without feeling again and again how difficult the position of the left would be but for the existence of the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker*.

A class and socialist approach to the issues of today is essential if the confusions are to be cleared up and clarity of aims achieved. Day-to-day organised and coherent leadership of the struggle is vital if the efforts of the right wing to divide and disorientate the movement are to be defeated. Greater activity on the factory floor by the trade unions is necessary if the Tory wage-freeze policy is to be defeated.

Only a Party like the Communist Party, nationally organised, disciplined, rooted among the industrial workers, and with a programme for the achievement of the aim of socialism, can give the leadership so urgently needed. Blackpool reinforced enormously the case for building the Communist Party and winning new readers for the *Daily Worker* in the Party Building Year.

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The Root Problem of the United Nations

Andrew Rothstein

I. WARTIME ADMISSIONS

Again and again, after Hitler Germany had attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, the leading statesmen of Britain and the U.S.A. declared that close co-operation between these leading powers of the capitalist world and the Soviet Union would be essential after the war, in order to ensure international peace and prosperity.

"What other hope can there be than this for the tortured world?" asked Churchill on April 20th, 1943. "All my hopes for the future of the world are based on the friendship and co-operation of the Western democracies and Soviet Russia," he wrote on March 7th, 1944. "The maintenance of peace, after this conflict is over, depends upon a close and intimate understanding between the nations of the British Commonwealth, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. If we can achieve this understanding, then all our problems, however difficult, can be resolved: and if we cannot achieve it, I say to this House, there is in my judgment no hope of a lasting peace," said Eden (then Foreign Secretary) in Parliament on February 23rd, 1944. A year later he went further, in a speech particularly worth recalling at the present time (February 27th, 1945):

> "How often visitors to Nuremberg were told by the Germans they met of the fear of Russia. I have had plenty of it chucked at me at interviews with Hitler myself. Can anyone doubt that that theme, before the war, was an element in making it difficult for us to establish an understanding with Soviet Russia? Can anyone doubt that, if we had had in 1939 the unity between Russia, this country and the United States that we cemented at Yalta" [the inter-Allied conference held on February 4th to 12th, 1945] "there would not have been the present war? I go further. Can anyone doubt that, so long as we hold that unity, there will not be another war? . . . The moment this fighting ceases Germany will be out on the old theme of propaganda again. She will again try to play us off against Russia, and Russia against America and ourselves. The whole orchestra of German self-pity will work up again to fortissimo. Let us be very careful that we do not fall victims to that."

In a letter to Stalin on April 28th, 1945, Churchill referred to "the long and bright years for all the world which we three powers alone can make together." Their quarrels, on the other hand, would "tear the world to pieces." They would be "a disaster hampering the great developments of world prosperity for the masses which are attainable *only by our trinity*" [my italics].

In these and numerous other declarations, Churchill, Eden and their Tory colleagues were tardily acknowledging the possibility of peaceful coexistence and co-operation between capitalist and socialist states, which the Soviet Union had proclaimed very early in its existence and repeatedly reaffirmed. Chicherin, then People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, had set out a detailed programme of economic and political co-operation at the International Economic Conference in Genoa (April 10th, 1922). In May 1927, at another international conference held in Geneva by the League of Nations, the Soviet delegation put forward another series of such proposals. At the third such conference, held in London in June 1933, during the world economic crisis, Litvinov—Chicherin's successor—had made yet further proposals, calculated to reduce the violence of the struggle for markets then raging by a big Soviet additional import programme, based on normal credit conditions, as well as a proposal for an "economic non-aggression pact."

All these proposals were ridiculed and rejected by the capitalist powers. The same happened to Soviet proposals for co-operation in the political field, against the rising tide of fascist aggression in Europe and Asia, between 1934 and 1939. Thus the declarations quoted earlier represented a change of tune by the Tory leaders. They were a forced change, due, above all, to pressure from the British people, both in and out of uniform, as there is ample recorded evidence to show. The ordinary British man and woman were making it plain, in the war years, that they expected friendship with the Soviet Union had come to stay. And this was one of the prime factors on which Lenin had counted from the first when advancing the policy of peaceful coexistence—that it should meet with the support, not only of those capitalist

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powers which for reasons of their own are not interested in a war, but of the working-class, peasantry, and groups of other classes in every capitalist country, for whom war brings only disaster.

II. THE MAINSTAY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The capitalist statesmen recognised, in particular, that co-operation between the great powers was essential if the future international organisation for collective peace and security were to be more effective for this purpose than the League of Nations set up in 1920 had been.

The failure of the League was not due, as the apologists of British policy in those years often try to make out, to the fact that America was outside it. When British governments were carrying out their pro-fascist policy inside the League —as during the Italian war on Ethiopia (1935-36) the Italian and German war on the Spanish Republic (1936-39) and the German attack on Czechoslovakia (1938)—the diplomatic publications and memoirs of recent years have revealed quite plainly that the United States government, although not in the League, was backing them to the full. Nor did the League fail because there were weaknesses and ambiguous clauses in its Covenant, as shortsighted people used to say. With all its weaknesses, the clauses proved quite sufficient to authorise sanctions against Italy in 1935, and joint action in 1937 to destroy Italian and German submarines which were torpedoing ships in the Mediterranean on their way to Spain. The Covenant only turned out to be "toothless" when the British, French and American governments wanted to encourage Hitler to go east, and Japan to go west. The British and French governments worked for this inside the League, the Americans outside. The hatred of these governments—and of the ruling classes which they represented—for the Soviet Union, attested nowadays by hundreds of documents then kept in strict concealment, dazzled their eyes with the mirage of a Nazi-Japanese attack on the country of socialism. In doing so, it wrecked the chances of collective security for their own peoples, and with it, naturally, the League of Nations too.

Only a firm agreement between the strongest powers in the world, at the end of German imperialism's third war in Europe, that they would stick together and not allow its revival, could ensure international peace: for no one else would have the courage or strength to break it. This was the lesson of the years 1920 to 1939.

This was what was implied in Eden's statement of February 27th, 1945. It was why Churchill, in a message to Stalin on November 25th, 1944, had written: "I trust first of all to our Treaty of Alliance" [between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.] "and close collaboration with the United States, to form the mainstay of a world organisation to ensure and compel peace upon the tortured world."

Stalin, in his review of affairs on November 6th, 1944, had also said of the coming world organisation that its actions "will be effective if the great powers which have borne the brunt of the war against Hitler Germany continue to act in a spirit of unanimity and accord. They will not be effective if this essential condition is violated."

The three powers gave an object-lesson of what such declarations meant—and they could be heard on all sides in the last months of the war and the first weeks after it—in the Potsdam agreements between them, signed in August 1945. Here was an unmistakable compromise, for the good of the world, signed between the only socialist power on earth—but the one which had "torn the guts" out of the Nazi armies, in Churchill's words — and the two greatest imperialist powers, arrived at after hard and stubborn argument. It proclaimed the aim of abolishing all German land, naval and air forces, "extirpating" German militarism and Nazism (the root of German militarism was the class of great and small landowners; the mainspring of the Nazi organisation was the great trusts which financed it), eliminating Germany's "war potential" and the cartels (trusts) with it, and removing everyone who had been supporting the Nazis from public life "and from positions of responsibility in important public undertakings."

These measures, taken together, would indeed "ensure that Germany will never again be able to destroy the peace of the world." In this respect the three powers—Churchill's "trinity"—would indeed be jointly fulfilling their responsibility to humanity. At the same time they were not deciding that Germany must be socialist, either in its economy or its political structure. Private ownership of the means of production was explicitly provided for, providing *monopolist* organisations were eliminated. The German people themselves, freed from the horrible incubus fastened on them by the militarist Prussian state in 1870 and developed by finance-capital into Hitler's "Third Reich," could decide their future.

III. THE UNANIMITY RULE

In the spirit of their pledges of co-operation,

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of which Potsdam was an earnest, the three powers agreed to construct the Security Council of the United Nations, as its special organ for "maintenance of international peace and security," in such a way as to make it depend on agreement between them. For this purpose, Article 27 of the United Nations Charter laid down that the affirmative vote of seven out of its eleven members was necessary for any decision of the Security Council: but that, in the case of any matters other than "procedural," i.e. on all political questions falling within its scope, the seven must include the "concurring votes" of the permanent members of the Council—the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, France and China.

In this way the co-operation so often promised in wartime, practised in arriving at the Potsdam terms for settlement with Germany, was "built" into the very structure of the United Nations. For what it meant was that, alternatively, if the three Potsdam powers (with France and China then very much on the sidelines) did *not* maintain that co-operation on questions coming before the Security Council—by hammering out compromise solutions even when they differed sharply—they would not vote together at the end of the discussion; and that would mean no valid decision could be arrived at, for the adverse vote of one of them (the "veto") would be sufficient to prevent it.

Thus, the application in practice of the principles of peaceful coexistence of countries with differing social and economic systems became the one essential condition of the effective working of the United Nations organisation for preserving peace, embodied in its constitution as it had not been embodied in that of the pre-war League of Nations.

This was perfectly clear in the early years of the United Nations. Thus, the official British commentary on the Charter, drawn up by the Foreign Office and published in 1945 (Cmd. 6666), stated (pp. 16-17):

> "The principle on which the Charter is based is that power must be commensurate with responsibility, and it is on the great powers that the Charter places the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. . . . It is imperative that the consent of the great powers should be necessary to action in cases in which they are not a party, since they will have the main responsibility for action. It is also clear that no enforcement action by the organisation can be taken against a great power itself without a major war. If such a situation arises, the United Nations will have failed in its purpose. . . . Thus the successful working of the United Nations depends on the preservation of the unanimity of the great powers, not, of course, on all the details of policy, but on its broad principles. . . . There are good grounds for believing that the great powers are determined to avoid actions which would destroy their unanimity."

In his very first annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1946 the Secretary-General underlined the Charter's assumption of great power agreement on major issues. He wrote:

> "The fact that the Charter gave the right of veto to each of these permanent members imposes upon them an obligation to seek agreement among themselves. I should be failing in my duty in presenting this report if I did not emphasise the absolute necessity that the powers should seek agreement amongst themselves in a spirit of mutual understanding and a will to compromise, and not abandon their efforts until such agreement has been reached."

Again, in his fourth annual report, presented in 1949, the Secretary-General referred to the problems of controlling atomic energy and other weapons of mass destruction, and of regulating and reducing other armaments. He said:

> "It is precisely here that unanimity of the great powers is essential. This unanimity would be just as necessary if there were no power of veto in the Security Council. There is no solution of such problems except by agreement among all the great powers. . . . It is essential for the great powers to keep in contact, to talk things over and seriously to negotiate with one another. To refuse such consultations as futile is to deny the whole concept of the United Nations."

While this was all common sense, it omitted one essential feature—or rather left that feature in the background because to mention it would have been "undiplomatic". The obligation to agree, to talk things over, to worry out compromise solutions, devolved not upon *any* great powers, but upon great powers one of which was a socialist state while the others were capitalist, imperialist, anti-socialist. Unless this reality is borne in mind, the real meaning of what happened to the wartime pledges and the unanimity rule in the United Nations Charter will not be understood.

IV. PROMISES AND PERFORMANCES

Within a very few months of the signature of the Potsdam agreement one thing became starkly obvious—that the imperialist powers, led by the British and United States governments, were brazenly and criminally breaking their most solemn obligations. They maintained large German

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armed forces, for the time being under their control, long before creating a West German state in 1949 to set up a fully-fledged army. Nazi businessmen were put back in their positions, Nazi officials were reappointed to responsible administrative posts, including the police and the courts, in 1945 and 1946, after a mock "denazification". So, far from the roots of militarism and Nazism —the landowning squires and the big trusts— being torn up, they were preserved and encouraged; and attempts to destroy them, e.g. nationalisation of the Ruhr, disallowed. The West German Republic, ruled by big business through a state machine swarming at every level with men who held leading positions under Hitler, had its foundations laid in the perfidious practices of the Western occupation authorities in 1945-46.

Thus the one great example of peacetime "friendship and co-operation between the Western democracies and Soviet Russia" was coldbloodedly and deliberately wrecked. It was only logical to wreck the unanimity provided for in the United Nations Charter.

In reality, the preparations for wrecking this, too, had been started long before. Such are the "dialectics" of imperialist policy, which might have a plainer and uglier name. The same message from Churchill to Stalin on November 25th, 1944, which has been quoted earlier contained these two sentences: "There has been some talk in the press about a Western *bloc*. I have not yet considered this." But as long ago as October 1942 the same Churchill had (as Macmillan revealed on September 5th, 1949) circulated a Cabinet memorandum in which he had spoken of the "measureless disaster if Russian barbarism overlaid the culture and independence of the ancient states of Europe"—and looked forward to a Council of Europe, "including the former great powers" (i.e. Germany and Italy), which would treat European economy as a whole and "act unitedly as one"—evidently as a barrier to the supposed peril from the U.S.S.R. He mentioned a series of peoples, from the Turks to the Spaniards, who would need help.

So obviously was this the preparation for a Western *bloc* that Churchill admitted that it was "hard to say now", and that "unhappily, the war has prior claims on our attention". In plain language, it would be awkward to reveal to your Soviet ally just now—when the blood of his soldiers, guerillas and people in occupied territories was being shed to win the war—what you intended to do with your pledges of friendship, once the war was won. But it would be naive in the extreme to imagine that General Smuts, a member of the War Cabinet, was speaking "off the cuff" and without consultation with Churchill when, on November 25th, 1943, he made a speech at the Empire Parliamentary Association calling for "a great European state" of Western Europe under British leadership, to protect its members against the post-war "Colossus", the Soviet Union. (He made the proposal still more precise, and still more anti-Soviet, in a speech to the South African Parliament on January 25th, 1944.) Of course, Churchill knew about it—and so, of course, his assurances to Stalin were untrue.

The great Soviet victories at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-43 and on the Kursk salient in the summer of 1943 had forced the Soviet Union's "allies" to accelerate their plans, that was all. Indeed, some of their leading officials at the time —for example, Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart in his *Comes The Reckoning*—admitted it afterwards in black and white. Nor was it by accident that, in August and September the same year, the British and United States governments concluded their secret agreement at Quebec to develop the atom bomb—secret not only from their temporary enemy, but from the Soviet Union which they regarded as their permanent enemy, in spite of all their pledges.

Eleven years later, in a speech at Woodford on November 23rd, 1954, Churchill admitted that, before the war was over, he had already instructed Field-Marshal Montgomery to collect the arms of the surrendering German troops, "so that they could easily be issued again to the German soldiers whom we should have to work with if the Soviet advance continued"—the advance, that is, against the Nazi armies which were still fiercely fighting in the east while conveniently letting the British, American and French forces enter Germany without resistance in the west.

However, it might be thought that these treacherous plans—without parallel in history since the days of the mercenary bands who fought the battles of Italian feudal princes in the later Middle Ages—were laid aside after the final meeting of Churchill (succeeded by Attlee), Truman and Stalin at Potsdam; and that the unanimity rule in Article 27 of the Charter was a sign of grace. Not a bit of it.

V. WHAT HAPPENED TO ARTICLE 27

From the very beginning of the United Nations Organisation the government of the United States, supported by the British Labour government and by all the other governments depending on the U.S.A. for money and arms, used majority votes to steamroller decisions through the Security Council, without attempting to reach a workable compromise with the

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U.S.S.R. and rejecting out of hand all its proposals. That was the origin of the numerous "vetoes" attributed to the Soviet representatives: the Western bloc which Churchill had not been thinking about in 1944 did not need to use the veto, it only had to vote as a team. It was not a mere exercise in platitudes that the Secretary-General was making when he implored the great powers to show "a will to compromise" and "to keep in contact, to talk things over and seriously to negotiate with one another". He was, in fact, putting his finger on the sore spot. Here are some—only some—outstanding examples:

Atomic weapons. In June 1946 the U.S.A. produced the "Baruch Plan": the United Nations to own and manage all atomic raw materials and plants everywhere, its decisions to be taken by a majority—including the right to "punish" violators—and the U.S.A. to retain its stocks and plants manufacturing atom bombs until the plan was "working satisfactorily". Clearly this meant complete military and economic domination of the whole world, including the U.S.S.R., by the U.S.A. and Britain. The Soviet government, in June 1947 (amplified in September 1948), proposed that the nations should agree on simultaneous destruction of stocks, prohibition of manufacture, and inspection by a United Nations Agency—in which there would be no "veto", though in the Security Council the unanimity rule would continue to apply if there was any question of enforcement. Clearly this was intended to provide equal treatment and a chance for compromise agreements.

The Soviet proposals were summarily rejected, and the Baruch plan steamrollered by majority vote though the Security Council and the Assembly.

General Disarmament. In December 1946 the Assembly unanimously decided that the Security Council should act quickly to reduce all armaments and armed forces, under international inspection and control (the resolution was moved by the U.S.S.R.). The Soviet government in the resulting disarmament committee, and in the Security Council and the Assembly on numerous occasions later,[1] proposed a start by early and drastic all-round reductions of all types of armaments, conventions about this and about methods of inspection to come into force simultaneously. The American and British governments insisted on discussing general principles of arms reduction (excluding atomic arms) and methods of control first. One side was proposing an immediate lightening of the heavy burden of armaments, the other—believing that it had a monopoly of atomic weapons—wanted to drag things out.

No attempt to work out the obvious compromise has ever been made by the capitalist powers. They have always voted down the Soviet proposals by a majority in the Committee, the Council and the Assembly, and steamrollered their own generalities by the same majority.

Mutual economic aid. From November 1943 to November 1946 a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) had given economic help to various countries, the three great powers co-operating. As it was due to end the following year, and there was prospect of widespread starvation and economic hardship, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations—supported by the U.S.S.R.—proposed the establishment of a smaller United Nations fund, to operate at least until the 1947 harvest was gathered in. The U.S.A. and British governments suddenly turned against it, insisting that they could not "bow to the will of the majority" and that it should be left to individual governments to choose whom they would help. All attempts to negotiate a compromise failed. The Director-General of UNRRA, La Guardia, an American ex-Mayor of New York, himself denounced this as "plain, ordinary, old-time power politics that has produced war after war." UNRRA died without any legitimate offspring.

The reason for this British and American action became clear the following year. In March 1947 the Economic and Social Council established a United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, representing all governments except Spain, which set about all kinds of useful arrangements to meet the bad shortages and economic bottlenecks existing all over the Continent—pooling available supplies of coal, timber for pit-props, rolling stock, steel, silica bricks for steel furnaces etc. In June, however, the United States announced the "Marshall Plan", promising American aid to European countries which came to agreement among themselves "to place Europe on its feet economically". From the outset it was clear that socialist countries would be excluded (the French and the Italian governments had in May expelled their Communist Ministers in order to get American money)—and this was demonstrated when the Soviet government proposed that the administration of such aid should be deputed to the Economic Commission for Europe: natural enough, since it was a truly

[1] Readers will find very useful the *Disarmament Diary* published by the British Soviet Friendship Society (No. 568 of its fortnightly Newsletter), giving particulars of the thirty-two Soviet proposals for disarmament between June 1946 and June 1961.

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balanced body, and the U.S.A. itself was a member. Not on your life! The American, British and French governments had held separate consultations in New York and in Paris (June 17th to 26th, 1947) in which they agreed to insist on a new administrative body, and on plans which would rebuild a "co-ordinated European economy" on the basis of "the resources which, in the main, they produced for themselves before the war". This meant that the socialist countries of Eastern Europe could not industrialise themselves, but would be returned to their old position of backward agricultural areas—while German industry which dominated them before 1939 would be rebuilt as one of the world's "great workshops" (Japan the other), in the words of Dean Acheson. When the Soviet delegation arrived, it was confronted with this scheme as a take-it-or-leave-it proposal—and no amount of argument would shift its three partners. Its compromise proposal was rejected, and it withdrew from the talks.

For the sake of a firmer American and British grip on the West European economies, and of weakening those of the socialist countries if possible (the U.S.S.R. had had an exceptionally bad harvest in 1946, and was still struggling with enormous devastation left by the German invasion), the imperialist powers again ignored the obligations of Article 27 of the Charter.

Membership of the United Nations. While the war was still in progress, the United States and British governments agreed that among the original members of the United Nations should be Byelorussia and Ukraine—the two westernmost nations of the U.S.S.R. not only with large populations (40 million and 9 million respectively) but with a record of hundreds of thousands of men and women partisans who took an active part in defeating the German armies. Then, on the strength of this, the United States demanded that Argentina—then a fascist state which joined the winning side at the last but did not shed the blood of a single soldier—should also be included among the founder-members! The Soviet government ultimately gave way on this. But the Americans (and British) for months refused to admit Poland —which had lost 6 million dead at the hands of the Nazis—as a founder-member, on the specious ground that there was still a dispute about the composition of its government.

Thus, very early on, it became obvious that the imperialist powers had some very peculiar ideas about "co-operation" and "a will to compromise" in this sphere. Since then, these have developed to monstrous dimensions.

In 1946 the Security Council—which has to recommend new members for admission—rejected the applications of Albania and Mongolia. After 1947 for a number of years it rejected those of Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania also. It rejected them, that is, by the adverse vote of the American-British bloc, on openly declared political grounds. In return, the U.S.S.R. refused to vote for Italy, Ireland, Austria and seven other states. From 1947 onwards the Polish, Soviet and other governments proposed a compromise, which would admit all of them together. The American-British bloc rejected the proposal for year after year, yielding in 1955, very reluctantly, only when the Italians began to "create". But even up to this day they refuse to accept Mongolia—as a result of which the new African state of Mauretania is kept out of the United Nations too.

The reason for this attitude is perfectly clear. The United States and British governments for years regarded the United Nations as their own property, to which they would admit only governments acceptable to them; and the basis for their attitude was command of a voting majority, instead of co-operation with the Soviet Union.

Still more glaring, in this respect, has been the refusal since 1949 of the United States government (backed up by Great Britain) to accept the admission of People's China, representing one-quarter of the world's population—and the mobilisation of support for this conduct by threatening to cut off economic aid for a number of its client states in Latin America and elsewhere. After its use of the same method to change the composition of the French and Italian governments in 1947, this is hardly surprising—but it certainly has been a denial of "the whole concept of the United Nations".

These are four outstanding examples. There have been many others—such as the formation in 1949 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), with its constitution providing for aggressive military action in defiance of articles 51 and 52 of the Charter which laid down the prior authority of the Security Council in military matters; the flagrant breach by the U.S.A., in October 1949 and ever since, of a "gentlemen's agreement" between the great powers after the war about geographical allocation of non-permanent seats in the Security Council; the refusal of the United Kingdom and United States governments in 1948-49 to co-operate with the Soviet Union to restore peace between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, by a compromise solution; and so on.

Quite recently there has been another exceptionally brazen example. The conference of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (I.A.E.A.) at Vienna had, at the beginning

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of October, to elect a new director-general. The board of governors, on which for years there has been a standing majority of the imperialist powers and their satellites, decided without consultation with the Soviet Union to nominate a Swede, Dr. Eklund, who for two years had been chairman of the management of a high-temperature reactor project belonging to the O.E.E.C.—the economic counterpart of NATO. In other words, he was the candidate of the U.S.A. and Great Britain, pure and simple. Not only did the Soviet Union object to this railroading, but a group of eleven neutralist nations on October 3rd moved the reference back of the Western bloc proposal for reconsideration—not without criticism of Eklund's qualifications as a scientist. But the imperialist countries pressed on with their candidate, without attempting to find a compromise solution (India, for example, proposed a year's delay for this purpose). They got their man in by forty-six to twenty-one—the socialist countries, India and several Asian and African countries voting against, while Egypt, Burma, Ceylon, Irak and Morocco abstained. Thus once again a decision was taken by the steamroller method, which implies that the institution concerned—in the Soviet delegate's words—is "an estate where succession is decided by the right of inheritance", and where the imperialist powers show that they "wish to rule, not to co-operate".

It was very noticeable that even the British Tory press on this occasion did not attempt to defend the methods used by the Western bloc.

VI. THE SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR THE SECRETARIAT

It was in the light of these experiences over fifteen years that in 1960, at the General Assembly, the Soviet Union put forward its proposal to replace the Secretary-General by an executive body of three members, respectively representing the socialist, imperialist and neutralist group of countries. Of course, the Soviet initiative was precipitated by the Secretary-General's arbitrary distortion of the Security Council's decision to send troops to the Congo, at the request of the lawful central government and to aid it in restoring order. Hammarskjoeld interpreted this to mean—preventing the central government from using its own radio and airfields to mobilise the country against the rebels in Katanga, ordering the United Nations troops not to enter Katanga, allowing a military rebellion against the central government itself in Leopoldville, and finally standing by while one group of rebels handed Lumumba, the elected Premier of the Congo, and his associates over to another group of rebels, by whom they were duly murdered.

But the whole point was that Hammarskjoeld was not acting in all this through some whim of his own. He was acting in the spirit of the Western imperialist bloc with whom he was closely associated in the running of the United Nations for several years (and of the overwhelmingly American and British officials of United Nations headquarters selected by the Western bloc). And if there was one thing the Western imperialist bloc wanted, it was by fair means or foul to keep the hands of the Congolese people, the Parliament and government they elected when they won independence in 1960, off the mineral riches, the copper and uranium and much else, of Katanga, in which many big foreign interests have their investments. Thus Hammarskjoeld's actions in the Congo were one more illustration of the imperialist bloc using the United Nations for their own purposes, as a house organisation under the control of the U.S.A. and its friends.

The Soviet proposal would put an end to this system. By creating an executive of three international civil servants instead of one, it would impose on them the obligation which Article 27 had originally laid down for the great powers—to take into account all the interests involved in problems of peace and security, instead of only one side.

Of course it was a new approach, compared with 1945. By the consolidation of the socialist states in Eastern Europe, by the Soviet Union's overcoming of its post-war difficulties, by the appearance of the mighty People's Republic of China and other socialist states in the Far East, there has emerged a powerful camp of socialism in the world numbering over 1,000 million. The immense victories of the national liberation movement in Africa and Asia have brought into existence new states which, while not socialist, have no love for imperialism and which total another 1,200 million people. Between them they comprise nearly two-thirds of humanity. The proposed three-man secretariat would mean that their national interests, together with those of the states in the imperialist group, would be more fairly represented at the United Nations headquarters. And it would be no longer a question of two groups of great powers having the moral obligation of reconciling their interests before using the machinery of the United Nations, but of three responsible officials in everyday control of its machinery finding "such wise solutions as will ensure peace", to use Khrushchov's words in the General Assembly on October 3rd, 1960—

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and by their unanimity, arrived at through consultation and compromise, creating the basis and authority for unanimity in the Security Council.

Of course this proposal has, for many months, aroused furious denunciation by the politicians of all the imperialist countries and of those which are client-states of the U.S.A. How they have denounced the "troika"—forgetful that Churchill sixteen years ago used a still more august word, "trinity", in speaking of the moral obligation of the leading capitalist and socialist states to find a common language! How they have proclaimed that it would "stultify", "paralyse", "split" and "wreck" the United Nations—conveniently overlooking the fact that it is precisely their actions, based on treating the United Nations as their handmaid, that have had just that effect over the years from 1945 to 1961! In reality, their outcry only shows one thing—that they still regard any obligation really to co-operate, discuss, find reasonable compromise solutions, acceptable to others' interests as well as their own, as intolerable.

As on so many previous occasions, the Soviet Union has shown itself flexible in its proposals, trying to meet the criticisms even of its most prejudiced opponents. In the course of discussions at the 1961 General Assembly, it advanced a provisional solution. This was that the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Security Council,

> "should invite as leader of the United Nations secretariat for a definite term (until April 1963) a person well known in United Nations circles, and that both the Security Council and the General Assembly should issue an appeal to the person and to his three deputies, who now work in the leading section of the secretariat and are highly skilled international officials from the U.S.S.R., the United States and one of the Asian or African countries, urging them to act in the spirit of concord. The Soviet delegation has explained that it does not envisage the use of the veto by any of these assistants of the temporary head of the United Nations administrative apparatus. However, he must co-operate daily with his assistants, as they with him, and must strive for the achievement of mutual agreement on the basic questions of the secretariat's work." (*Statement issued by the Soviet delegation on October 2nd,* 1961.)

Later, according to the press, the Soviet delegation offered to modify its proposal further, by extending the number of assistants, so as to give more representation to different regions of the world. But up to the time of writing, the United States delegation continued to say "No".

VII. POSSIBILITIES

It may be asked, is there any real basis at all for expecting such a proposal to be accepted? Will not those who broke their own wartime pledges, and defied their obligations under the United Nations Charter which they themselves drew up, continue to do so, even though the obligations be presented in a new form?

To that the only possible answer is that the situation has radically changed since 1945. In the words of Khrushchov at the 1960 Assembly:

> "In the first post-war years the Soviet Union had a powerful army but a devastated national economy, and the three imperialist powers hoped that our state would soon breathe its last. They hoped that the existence of the socialist system on earth would thus end, and that socialism would survive only as an ideological and theoretical problem. However, all these hopes of the imperialists, the colonialists and monopoly capital proved to be illusory, and collapsed. Not only did the Soviet Union restore its strength, but it also developed a pace which has astonished all mankind."

Moreover, Khrushchov pointed out, the other socialist states in Europe and Asia had made vast progress too, and "new young states following a neutralist policy have emerged on the international scene".

To continue to act as they did in 1945 and the immediately following years, the imperialists must blind themselves completely to realities. They have to ignore the fact that the realms under their sway have contracted very considerably, and that even in their own remaining empires their rule is under heavy fire (as Kenya, Rhodesia, Algeria, Angola show): while the Soviet Union with its allies is in a better position to stand up to blackmail if threatened, or to offer valuable co-operation if approached in friendship. What can happen if the imperialists ignore these facts staring them in the face? More and more fiascos —or wilder gambles and more irresponsible adventures on their part, bringing the world closer to nuclear war.

It would be a shallow and at bottom helpless pretence at political analysis indeed to say that, in these conditions, the combined force of self-interest, dividing the various capitalist groups both nationally and within each nation, and of pressure from the people insisting on peaceful coexistence, is incapable of compelling the imperialist governments—the U.S.A. and Great Britain in particular—to see reason. They can be made to return to the pledges they made in 1945. It is the obligation of everyone who wants peace and human survival to join in the fight for this aim.

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Transition from Socialism to Communism: Economic Aspects

Maurice Dobb

FROM time to time in the past the criticism has been levelled against Marxism that it had no clear blueprint of what a socialist economy would be like. Marx was himself careful, it is true, to avoid the errors of the "utopian socialists", and of what he sometimes called the "sectarian socialists", and emphasised that the precise shape of the new society, since it was an historical product, could not be defined until one was confronted by the actual situation from which it would directly emerge. In this he was being realistic. Concrete circumstances, as we know, modify cases (we may recall Lenin's well-known saying: "Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will *never* live to see it."). In his famous *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875 (criticising some of the "Lassallean" formulations in the draft programme of the new unified German Workers' Party) Marx indicated some of the broader features of that new society, but no more.

Today we have before our eyes socialist societies (in being or in the building) over more than one-third of the world; and we now have also the first tentative blueprint for making the transition to Marx's "higher phase of communist society" a century after he wrote the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Critics can no longer complain of lack of definiteness; instead, some of them perform a *volte-face* to utter cries about "unrealistic utopian promises", "propaganda wishful thinking in service of the cold war", etc. But some people like to have it both ways.

Socialist Society

We may remember that in the *Critique* Marx emphasised that in the first stage after the social revolution "we have to deal with . . . a society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges". Economically, a leading consequence of this is that the share of each individual in consumption will depend on the amount of labour he gives to society (wages according to amount and quality of work). The total consumption fund of society available for distribution among its members can never equal the total social product; since from the latter has to be deducted the product needed for the expansion as well as replacement of means of production (also for a "reserve or insurance fund against misadventures", for maintaining "non-productive services" such as health and education, and for pensions). These deductions were described by Marx as "an economic necessity", and their amount as "determined by available means and forces, and partly by calculation of probabilities, but in no way calculable by equity". The individual worker or producer accordingly "receives back from society, after the deductions have been made, exactly what he gives to it . . . his individual amount of labour". In *this* sense (by contrast with capitalist society) there is "equal right" as between all workers; but it is equal *only* in relation to labour as a standard of judgement, and men are unequal physically and mentally, and, hence, in the labour they can supply. This "limitation on equal right", "inevitable in the first phase of communist society [i.e. socialism] as it is when it has just emerged from capitalist society after prolonged birth pangs", can only disappear

> "after labour, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly" (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*).

In 1917 Lenin was to enlarge on this in his *State and Revolution*, but he did not add materially to it as regards the conditions that would make a transition to communism possible. In connection with the simultaneous "withering away of the state", he speaks of

> "such a high stage of development of communism that the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, that is to say, when one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality disappears—a source, moreover, which cannot be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.
>
> "This expropriation will *facilitate* the enormous development of the productive forces. And seeing how capitalism is already *retarding* this development to an incredible degree, seeing how much progress

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> could be achieved even on the basis of the present level of modern technique, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of . . . removing the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour into 'the prime necessity of life'—we do not and *cannot* know."

He added: "The question of length of time, or the concrete forms" of the further transition to communism must for the present be left open "because there is *no* material for an answer to these questions". (Further on he says: "The political difference between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous; but it would be ridiculous to take cognisance of this difference now, under capitalism; and only isolated anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance.")

Soviet Experience

Today there *is* material, at least for part of an answer to these questions. In the first place, the growth of the productive forces of the Soviet Union has by now laid the basis for a sharp increase in the consumption fund of socialist society, and, hence, in the standard of life and of individual culture—this despite the devastation of two world wars and invasion, and the continuing diversion of huge resources to guard against a third. This is the basic historical fact which has enabled the new programme of the C.P.S.U. to forecast a sufficient state of economic affluence by 1980 to permit such important elements in the standard of life as canteen meals, public transport and houseroom to be supplied free according to the principle of "to each according to his needs", as well as a great extension of medical services and health facilities and the maintenance of the old and the young and the disabled.

Meanwhile, the experience of building socialism has yielded, in addition to much-enhanced productive power, certain lessons about the path and methods of socialist development, which were not (nor scarcely could be) available before.

Firstly, there was the lesson of the prime importance of continually raising the productivity of labour and to this end improving and modernising technique. From this followed the importance of maintaining the rate of expansion of the sector of industry producing capital goods (Marx's Department I): if its rate of growth were to be seriously reduced, then (except in so far as new techniques have so-called "capital-saving" effects) the expansion of the economy as a whole must be reduced. We know that today in the Soviet economy (and in most other socialist countries) the disparity in growth-rates between the two main sectors or departments of industry is much smaller than it was formerly, especially in the pre-war and immediate post-war years; but so-called heavy industry continues to take the lead.

At the same time, on the basis of past achievements in expanding the output capacity of fuel and power and steel and engineering, it is now possible to maintain also a high rate of expansion of consumer goods industries and of housing. The previous serious lag in agricultural production, especially livestock, has meanwhile been overcome. Thus, the scarcities and austerities of the pre-war period (and the immediate post-war years) have come to be things of the past; and attention has been directed towards a reduction of income differentials for different grades of work by raising the lower grades and basic rates relatively to the more highly paid. It is also clear that during the past decade the difference between rural and urban incomes has been considerably narrowed by an increase of the former at a proportionately higher rate.

Secondly, there has been the lesson that commodity production and market exchange (and, hence, value-categories and the "law of value") continue under socialism. This is not only because of the existence of the "two forms of socialist property" (collective farm property in agriculture and state property in the means of production in industry), but because of the sale of consumer goods on the retail market, where wage and salary earners (as well as collective farmers) who receive their incomes in cash "realise" these incomes and exercise free consumers' choice. (Clearly, wage differentials would lose much, if not most, of their force as economic incentives if this were not so.)

In the discussions of the last few years it has been emphasised that the importance of commodity production and of market categories, and with this the use of economic incentives in production, will continue and even increase during the transition from socialism to communism. An illustration of this is the revision a few years ago of tax scales and prices for collective farmers which had previously been exerting a negative effect on agricultural production (and the draft programme refers to the continuing need to keep "the level of state purchase prices" high enough to ensure "greater incomes for *kolkhoze*" and sufficient encouragement to them to raise labour productivity). Similarly in industry there have been changes designed to associate the interests of workers more closely with the productive results of their own factory, especially as regards increased efficiency and improved quality. With greater decentralisation of economic administration and planning since 1957 this question has acquired added significance.

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Says the draft programme:

> "It is necessary in the course of constructing communism to make full use of commodity-money relations in keeping with their meaning in the period of socialism. In this, such instruments of economic development as cost accounting, money price, production-cost, profit, trade, credit and finance play a big part. . . . There will be a further strengthening of the monetary and credit system. . . . The price system should be continuously improved. . . . Prices must, to a growing extent, reflect the socially necessary outlays of labour, ensure return of productive and distributive expenditures and a certain profit for each enterprise that is operating normally. Systematic price-reductions based on growth of labour productivity and reduced costs of production are the main trend of price-policy in the period of constructing communism."

Planning

Thirdly, socialist economy has acquired experience of planning methods which enable the general statements of Lenin nearly half a century ago about "social accounting and control" to be transformed into much more detailed precepts and rules. This greatly enriched experience of three decades of planning both gives a firmer knowledge of the internal structure and relations of the productive system than a capitalist state can ever have, and provides also the instruments whereby balanced and proportional development can occur, harnessing the full potential of productive capacity and steering its growth in such a way that excess capacity and oscillations do not occur. (This is not to say that planning is always perfect and makes no mistakes: it is to say that it has a *potentiality* altogether different in kind from a capitalist system.)

This is the basis for the kind of forecast of the next twenty years contained in the new Soviet programme, and forming, indeed, its keystone; and this is why these are not just "forecasts" and "guesses" such as we know in the capitalist world with its "anarchy of production", but are sober, even conservative, estimates, based on projecting into the future the possibilities that planning experience has already revealed as actual and realistic. In connection with planning, the programme emphasises the need for further improving "the scientific level of planning, accounting, statistics and industrial designing", with particular reference to increasing the effectiveness of investment (a matter on which there has been much recent discussion) by "the choice of the most profitable and economical trends in capital construction, achieving everywhere the maximum growth of output per invested rouble, and reducing the time-lag between investment and the return on it". ("Cybernetics, computers and control systems must be introduced on a large scale in industry, research, designing, planning, accounting, statistics and management.")

Reference is also made to the need to combine centralised planning, which concentrates on the setting of "key targets" and on "co-ordinating and dovetailing plans drawn up locally" with "economic independence and rights of local organs and enterprises", with an increasing role for "plans and recommendations made at lower levels" and with "timely correction and amendment of plans in course of their fulfilment". Not only "extension of operative independence and *initiative of* [industrial] *enterprises* on the basis of state plan-targets", but "direct and most active participation of *trade unions* in elaborating and realising economic plans" and in "management of enterprises" at both top level and lower levels is emphasised.

The "Two Forms of Socialist Property"

It should be explained, perhaps, that a few years ago there was a good deal of discussion about the question of the "two forms of socialist property" in agriculture and of their future in the course of the transition to communism. Stalin in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* of 1952, while repudiating proposals that collective farm property should be nationalised, spoke of the need "to raise collective farm property to the level of public property", on the ground that the existence of collective farm property, with the commodity relations connected with it, was already "beginning to hamper the development of our productive forces . . . since they [i.e. the commodity relations] create obstacles to the full extension of government planning to the whole of the national economy including agriculture". Linked with this contention went the proposal to substitute for market relations between industry and agriculture some form of direct "products exchange".

In the discussions of the following years the view gained ground that, instead of the perspective of collective farms being converted at some stage into state farms, *both* forms of property should undergo development and evolve into a new and common socialist form.

Thus, at the time of the transfer of Machine and Tractor Station property (machinery) to the collective farms, Ostrovitianov wrote as follows:

> "It is becoming clear that co-operative collective farm property can grow into the common form of property belonging to the whole people without being turned into state property. . . . The idea has gained currency in recent years that commodity exchange is incompatible with the prospect of going over from socialism to communism. Such a formulation of the question is wrong."

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The new programme says of the collective farm system:

> "The *kolkhoz* blends the personal interests of the peasants with common, nation-wide interests, individual with collective interests in the results of production. . . . It is essential to make the most of the possibilities and advantages of the *kolkhoz* system. . . . The *kolkhoz* is a school of communism for the peasantry. Economic advancement of the *kolkhoz* system creates conditions for the gradual *rapprochement* and, in the long run, also for the merging of *kolkhoz* property and the property of the whole people into one common property."

Some Misconceptions

Some possible misconceptions about the nature of communism are removed by the draft programme. Some might suppose that communism would be an anarchic, entirely go-as-you please, *Cannery Row*-kind-of-existence, in which only the conscientious or the "squares" worked and the remainder did as they pleased—a sort of *beatnik* paradise. In fact, it is stated that

> "Communist society, which is based on highly organised production and advanced technology, alters the character of work, but it does not release the members of society from work. It will by no means be a society of anarchy, idleness and inactivity. . . . Communist production demands high standards of organisation, precision and discipline, which are ensured, not by compulsion, but through an understanding of public duty, and are determined by the whole pattern of life in communist society. . . . Labour will no longer be a mere source of livelihood—it will be a genuinely creative process and a source of joy."

Some might suppose that individual property in means of consumption would disappear as well as property in means of production. On the contrary, we are told that while "people's requirements will be satisfied from public sources . . . articles of personal use will come into the full ownership of each member of society and will be at his disposal".

Some might (indeed do) suppose that all individual differences will be ironed out, and everyone be made to conform to a uniform pattern in his mode of life and in what he consumes. On the contrary, "the purpose of communist production is . . . to provide all its members with material and cultural benefits according to their growing needs, their individual requirements and tastes". The difference will be, not that individual variations disappear or are ignored, but that increasingly "people's requirements will be satisfied from public sources".

In case old *canards* about communism and the family should be revived, it is worth noting the statement that, since "communism is the system under which . . . (man's) best moral qualities blossom forth and reveal themselves in full . . . family relations will be freed from material considerations and will be based solely on mutual love and friendship".

In case, again, some should argue that in talking of such changes Communists are ignoring human nature (an old gibe), it should be stressed that there is no proposal to abolish economic incentives at one stroke. The programme realistically states that:

> "Proper combination of *material and moral* incentives is a great creative factor in the struggle for communism. In the course of the advance to communism the importance of moral labour incentives, public recognition of achieved results and the sense of responsibility of each for the common cause will become continuously greater."

Be it noted that they will "become greater", but their increase will be a gradual process, and they will replace the former only to the extent that they have sufficiently developed and matured.

The Economic Basis of Transition

What, then, can be said to be the material basis on which the notion of a forthcoming transition from the socialist stage of development to a yet higher stage is based? Is this transition conceived as coming suddenly, in a single dramatic "leap", or coming gradually step by step? And what are to be the outward and visible signs of the change?

It is to be noted that the programme is careful to state that "the C.P.S.U., being a party of scientific communism, proposes and fulfils the tasks of communist construction in step with the preparation and maturing of the material and spiritual prerequisites, considering that it would be wrong to jump over necessary stages of development, and that it would be equally wrong to halt at an achieved level and thus check progress. The building of communism must be carried out by successive stages".

Quite clearly, the material basis for the transition can be nothing else than the growing abundance of consumer goods (and of other elements in the standard of life) as a result of expanded productive power and heightened productivity of labour. This will make possible shorter hours of work, greater leisure, new attitudes to work as well as new cultural and moral standards. A leading feature of the transition will be a rise in the specific weight of socially-provided services and facilities as elements n the standard of life, compared with commodities and services provided through the market (i.e. sold in shops or realised at a price in exchange for the money incomes of citizens). At the same time, the "two forms of socialist property" of which we have spoken will tend to come closer together as a result of changes *both* in the organisation of collective farms (and of other forms of co-operative production) *and* in state-owned agriculture and industry in the direction of greater decentralisation and democratisa-

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tion. The effect of greater mechanisation will simultaneously be to diminish greatly the number of laborious unskilled manual jobs. With such changes it is the intention to narrow existing differences in monetary rewards by raising the lower categories towards the level of the highest, and to assimilate both conditions of work and the consumption level of the rural population to urban conditions and standards.

Says the programme:

> "The disparity between high and relatively low incomes must gradually shrink. Increasingly large numbers of unskilled personnel will become skilled, and the dwindling difference in proficiency and labour productivity will be accompanied by a steady reduction of disparities in the level of pay. As the living standard of the whole population rises, low income levels will approach the higher, and the disparity between the incomes of peasants and workers, low-paid and high-paid personnel and the populations of different parts of the country will gradually shrink."

At the same time

> "personal needs will be increasingly met out of public consumption funds, whose rate of growth will exceed the rate of growth of payments for labour. . . . The transition to communist distribution will be completed after the principle of distribution according to one's work has outlived itself, that is when there is abundance of material and cultural wealth and labour has become a prime necessity of life for all members of society".

This material basis for the transition is no wishful thinking, but represents the level of production *per capita* of the population which can be reasonably expected two decades from now (given that peace is maintained) as a result of extrapolating into the future the production-increases of recent years. A few figures and some simple arithmetical calculation will show this to be so. Gross industrial output in recent years has been increasing in the U.S.S.R. by 10 per cent or slightly more per annum (with production of capital goods by 11 or 12 per cent and of consumer goods by about 8 per cent)[1]. The national income has been increasing (on the average of the last five years) by 8 per cent.

This growth-rate is somewhat higher than was envisaged by the seven-year plan for 1959-65, which provided for an annual increase in gross industrial output of 8.6 per cent; amounting to a rise of 80 per cent over the seven-year period as a whole. (The increase in the whole national income over the seven-year period was to be between 62 and 65 per cent, and in "consumption expenditure" between 60 and 63 per cent.)

Forecast of the Next Two Decades

To come to what is said about future economic growth in the draft programme: this provides for a rise in industrial output of 150 per cent over the next ten years (i.e. by the end of 1970). This level would be attained with an annual (compound) rate of growth over the coming decade that was somewhat *less* than that of the past five years (say, just over 9 per cent instead of 10 per cent). In *this* sense it is a cautious target, and by no means fanciful and optimistic as some Western commentators (including some on the B.B.C.) have maintained. This level of industrial output would substantially exceed the *present* level of U.S. industrial output; and unless U.S. production grows during the coming decade appreciably faster than its growth-rate during the past decade, the Soviet level would by then surpass the U.S. level *of that year* (1970).

The same can be said of what is forecast for the *second decade*. A continued annual (compound) rate of growth of 10 per cent per annum would raise production by the twentieth year to a level of rather *more* than six times the present level: i.e. raise it by more than 500 per cent. In the draft programme 500 per cent is given as the increase in industrial production by the year 1980 (and 400 per cent as the increase in total national income). This will involve raising labour-productivity in industry over the two decades (mainly through improved technique) by three times, or rather more, to a level that will be about double the present U.S.A. level; and labour productivity in agriculture by more than five times (probably the most difficult to forecast of all).

At the same time efforts will be concentrated

> "on ensuring a rapid increase in the output of consumer goods. The growing resources of industry must be used more and more to meet fully all the requirements of Soviet people and to build and equip enterprises and establishments catering for the household and cultural needs of the population. Along with an accelerated development of all branches of light and food industries, the share of consumer goods in the output of heavy industry will also increase.[2] More electricity and gas will be supplied to the population. . . . Output of consumer goods must meet the growing consumer demand in full, and must conform to its changes".

[1] *Planovoe Khoziaistvo*, the Gosplan journal, in its issue for September (1961, No. 9, p. 9) states that 10.6 per cent has been the mean yearly growth of industrial production for the last sixteen years; that Soviet industrial production in 1960 was 60 per cent of the American; and that the Soviet Union will reach 106 per cent of the present American level by 1966 and 156 per cent of that level by 1970 if Soviet industrial production continues to grow at 10 per cent per annum.

[2] Presumably this is a reference to so-called "consumers' durables" from refrigerators and washing machines to motor-cars.

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On this basis it is estimated that the real income *per head* of the population will increase by more than two-and-a-half times by 1980.

Thus, it is hoped and anticipated that by 1970 the Soviet Union "will surpass the strongest and richest capitalist country, the U.S.A., in production *per head* of the population", that the housing problem will be solved, and "the U.S.S.R. will have the shortest working day", thereby "creating the material and technical basis for communism".

In the *following* decade (1971-80) "the material and technical basis of communism will be created and there will be an abundance of material and cultural benefits for the whole population". In consequence "Soviet society will come close to a stage where it can introduce the principle of distribution according to needs, and there will be a gradual transition to one form of ownership—public ownership". The threshold of the communist stage of society will have been reached. In the period subsequent to this "the construction of communist society will be fully completed".

This is not a romantic picture of a leap from one stage of development into the next; but a carefully graduated phasing of development in which consequences are made to follow upon pre-conditions, and future achievement is related to present and past achievement to form a rational and realistically-grounded pattern of advance.

Human Wants and Use-Values: Capitalism and Socialism

A general question arises here, of some interest to economists at least. As the productive power of a country grows and the supply of consumer goods becomes more abundant, there is a sense in which the use-value aspect of these goods becomes more important as compared with their aspect as exchange-values. Some economists of the marginal utility school have even been apprehensive about a possible conflict between these two aspects. A leading member of the Austrian school, Friedrich von Wieser, towards the end of last century, spoke about the "antinomy" between use-value and exchange-value; pointing out that as the supply of goods in relation to wants became sufficiently abundant (i.e. as the *satisfaction* of wants grew) they would tend to lose their exchange-value. This is, of course, a prospect to be feared by bourgeois economy.

One may remember that Marx in a different context spoke about capitalism halting the increase in productive power "at a point determined by the production and realisation of profit, not by the satisfaction of social needs". For obvious reasons too great an increase of production creates a problem for capitalism—a problem which it meets either by concerted measures to restrict production or by measures to boost effective demand (often in a quite artificial manner). Thus, in recent years there has been a great deal of anxious discussion about ways in which capitalism can be kept going (surplus value continue to be "realised", in Marxist language) by pressurising consumers to buy what salesmen want to dispose of and by creating various forms of social waste.

Hence, the important role in modern capitalist society of the "admen" and the "hidden persuaders", the attempts to cultivate a social atmosphere of competitive emulation among consumers in buying new gadgets and maintaining standards of expenditure which are valued for the social prestige or status they yield, rather than for the real human wants they satisfy. Hence, the popularity not only of armament expenditures by the state but of what one may call "premature obsolescence" of durable goods (scrapped before they are worn out because meantime a new style or model has been introduced and everyone is under pressure to have the latest thing). Hence, also the kind of wasteful expenditure that the American writer Thorstein Veblen called, with intentional pomposity, "conspicuous consumption" and "honorific waste". All this, liberally bolstered up by the hire-purchase system and a growing structure of hire-purchase credit, has become an organised system under modern capitalism, whereby the conflict between growing productive power and consumer demand is staved off for a while. With it go a whole tribe of moral distortions in the social life of modern society which it is not in place to describe at the moment, but which are only too patently before our eyes.

It is, perhaps, a commonplace to say that the problem of abundance is no problem for a socialist society (provided that the necessary changes in the structure of production can be planned sufficiently far ahead). On the contrary to being a problem, it confronts socialist society with a unique historical opportunity—the opportunity of beginning a transition to a yet higher phase of socialist society. And if there should remain any doubt in anyone's mind as to whether this statement is true, the issue will be tested by the facts of development in the Soviet Union over the present decade and the next.

Can it be this that the champions of the so-called "free world" of unplanned private enterprise, on both sides of the Atlantic, at present so reluctant to contemplate an international *détente* and disarmament, are really afraid of?

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The Growth of Modern Fiction

David Craig

NO one but an intellectual snob would deny that fiction was the most important form of literature in the modern world. This means *both* that the huge bulk of the shoddy printed matter fed to the people by the profiteers in fiction—pornography, wild-west stories, thrillers, and lending-library "romances"—*and* that the great literary masterpieces nowadays are novels and stories. But this has been so for only a century and a half. We have, therefore, to find out why fiction now dominates, and not the more rhythmical and figurative forms of language—the folk-songs and art poetry of any century up to the seventeenth.

The best Marxist writers on literature have excelled at showing how the writer is not a lonely individual: he shares his experience with the mass of mankind. So, too, the forms of language he uses originate in the practical activity of the common people. Thus, Plekhanov points out that "the trail may have been the prototype of writing": hunters made marks like animals or their tracks to indicate to their fellow-hunters where game was to be found.[1] So social labour gives us the root of the alphabet. Likewise George Thomson finds the roots of poetic metre in the indrawn breath and grunt that precede and accompany a heavy blow or heave, and the roots of the sentence, with its subject, verb, and object, in "the three elements of the labour process—the personal activity of the labourer, the subject of his labour, and its instruments".[2]

But alphabet, metre, and sentence originated before written records. The novel in Britain originated with the rise of merchant capitalism in the late sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries. By that time society was extremely complex and the process of cultural change difficult to disentangle, as the links between changes in production and their effects on the various forms of artistic expression became more and more indirect. But there are leading clues which can be followed up.

Prose fiction has one advantage over poetry in that it is written in prose, and we all speak prose. No special talent is needed to follow it, no special technique comes between the printed book and the ordinary reader. It is, therefore, difficult for prose to stay for long away from common speech, and, therefore, from common life. And in fact a plain prose, intelligible to the farm labourer, the tinsmith, the shopkeeper's wife, and the country gentleman, grew up precisely at a time when the whole country had become intensely interested in what was going on in society, the time of the civil war. When London began to mobilise behind the progressive group in Parliament in 1641, "The great leader of the Commons, Pym, welcomed this popular support, and in the Grand Remonstrance . . . the revolutionary leaders drew up a sweeping indictment of Charles's government, and published it for propaganda purposes—a new technique of appeal to the people."[3]

Of course, the first result of this was a wave of political pamphlets and popular discussion of politics. But literature, too, was bound to react, and adapt itself to this new kind of public. By the 1660's and 1670's the important literary works were beginning to win a mass circulation: the first serious novel in English, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, sold 100,000 copies between 1678 and 1692, Butler's anti-Puritan poem *Hudibras* was a best-seller, Dryden's satires had an immediate big sale and he himself was concerned to find the qualities which would enable a poem to "force its own reception in the world".[4] In contrast the fine works of the previous generation, the poems of the metaphysicals (Donne and his school) had circulated in manuscript amongst small groups of gentlemen at Westminster and in country houses and the Inns of Court.

Satire and Essay

Everyone knows that the typical works of the next generation were the satire and the essay—Dryden and Pope, Addison and Steele, Defoe. Theirs was a kind of writing which applied directly to the common life of the day, not to a remote idyllic or fantastic world from the Bible or the Greek and Roman classics. Writers stopped taking for granted any specialised high culture in their readers. Defoe was a popular journalist, and as a novelist, too, he wrote in a language as near as possible to the common currency of the day, especially the style of the true

[1] G. Plekhanov, Sixth Letter on the Art of Primitive Peoples: *Unaddressed Letters* and *Art and Social Life* (Moscow, 1957), 142–143.

[2] *Marxism and Poetry* (1945), 14–19; *The First Philosophers* (1955), 41.

[3] Christopher Hill, *The English Revolution, 1640* (1955 edn.), 41.

[4] W. Y. Tindall, *John Bunyan: Mechanick Preacher* (New York, 1934), 211; Geoffrey Walton in *Scrutiny* (1937), VI, 191; Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets* (Everyman), I, 205, 209; Dryden, *Poems* (ed. Sargeaunt, 1913), 48.

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life-story of a celebrity which also was popular at the time—Robinson Crusoe the castaway, Moll Flanders the successful kept woman. So the novel was taking shape out of an assortment of literary forms. This kind of cultural process is well described in the section of the Role of the Masses in the Development of Culture in the new *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism:* "Even today folk-art still possesses intrinsic artistic value; it is an inexhaustible treasure-house of imagery and means of expression, a source of inspiration to writers and artists. It is in folk-art that the national form of the art and literature of every country is conceived and takes shape" (p. 219). I would add to that: whenever a national art takes a *new direction*, it gets its new impulse from some popular forms which have hitherto been circulating in a rough-and-ready state. We are constantly hearing about the debasing effects of the mass media on serious culture, but we must also notice the cross-fertilisation that takes place. At present the best and most progressive writers in English are noticeably influenced in their plays and fiction by films and TV: Arnold Wesker began writing his plays while at the London School of Film Technique, Arthur Miller has recently brought out a piece of short fiction (*The Misfits*) deliberately shaped to be more or less a shooting script for use by a film director.

From the later sixteenth century on we see fiction coming together out of various ingredients. Thus, the prose tales of Thomas Deloney, most readable of the "primitive" Elizabethan novelists, may have been commissioned as propaganda by the gilds of clothiers and shoemakers.[5]

The works of the first recognisably modern novelist, Fielding, are visibly pieced together from various current forms. In *Joseph Andrews* (1742) alone, we can see distinctly the sermon or pious tract—the story of the clergyman who preaches Christian resignation but cannot bear it when his own little child is thought drowned; the satirical pamphlet or cartoon letterpress—the cracks, for example, at the landlord who squanders his rents in London instead of spending them locally for the good of his tenants; the "polite" periodical essay—the little lectures on style or burlesque or epic which open the sections of the novel (as also in *Tom Jones*, 1749); and, above all, that most popular of primitive fictional forms, the picaresque, or disjointed narrative of a rogue's adventures, which supplies the rather pointless succession of events typical of Fielding.

Even *Jonathan Wild* (1743), more consistently pointed than most of his work, first came out as one item in a miscellany—evidence of the slow way in which the novel was separating itself from the mass of printed stuff. And *Jonathan Wild* is shaped as a parody of the kind of flattering life of a member of the nobility which hacks used to write in the hope of patronage—just as *Moll Flanders* (1722) has elements in it of the kind of "true life story" of a famous courtesan or rogue which used to circulate in handbill form among the crowd who had gathered to see the rogue hanged on the public scaffold.

Defoe in fact used this appearance of factual authenticity to cloak the profanity (according to puritanical opinion) of writing fictions (Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, 1932, 102): his *Life of Colonel Jack* (1722) is advertised as a "History of the most remarkable life, and extraordinary adventures of the truly Honourable Colonel Jacque, vulgarly called Colonel Jack, who was born a gentleman, put apprentice to a pickpocket, flourished six-and-twenty years a thief, and was then kidnapped to Virginia; came back a merchant; was five times married to four whores; went into the wars; behaved bravely; got preferment. . . ."

And, finally, yet another element is brought in by Samuel Richardson, in whose *Pamela* and *Clarissa* (1740, 1748) the novel begins to take on something of the modern psychological subtlety. He had been in his time a professional letter-writer, and those novels are in the form of a sequence of private letters. It has been pointed out that his was in fact an age in which private letter-writing—in addition to the old use of correspondence mainly for commercial, political, or diplomatic business—was becoming common as the result of the new penny post inside London and the increasing efficiency of mails in the rest of the country.[6]

Prose and Poetry

The closeness of prose to ordinary speech does not explain by itself why fiction was able to replace poetry. Poetry had the immemorial advantage of springing out of the community itself, at work as in the work-song, at play as in the ballad. The novel nowadays is normally read by the individual person isolated within the four walls of his own room—an activity typical of bourgeois society with its acute fragmentation of work into narrow specialisms or routines and of society into classes. Actually the early novel circulated in a way that carried over something of the community-life of poetry: it was read aloud. *Tom Jones* and Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748) were kept in the bacon-racks in the farm kitchens and read aloud to the labourers and dairymaids by whoever among the workpeople was able to read; blacksmiths read *Pamela* to the villagers, who rang the church bells to celebrate the happiest

[5] *Elizabethan Fiction*, ed. Ashley and Moseley (New York, 1953), 313.

[6] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), 189

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incidents in the plot; William Chambers, pioneer of cheap publishing in the nineteenth century, used to go to a bakehouse at five in the morning when he was a bookseller's apprentice and read *Gil Blas* (most famous of the picaresque novels), Smollett, and Fielding, to the men as they worked, in exchange for a hot roll![7] However, the fragmentation of literature into commodities sold to individual consumers was by that time well under way, and it seems to have been this process, part of the main trend of capitalist development, which enabled fiction to supersede poetry.

The seizure of power, political and economic, by the merchant capitalists after the civil war had led to the dominance of London as the all-powerful centre of English society. The City and the Bank of England came to be the decisive power behind the head of state and the Parliament. The businessmen were now rich enough to lend to the state, and the foreign and other policy of the country begins to flow directly from the centre of commerce.[8]

Everybody knows how local self-sufficient producers cannot hope to compete with producers in the big centres. "One capitalist always kills many." As it was with tools or clothing or raw materials, so it was with literature. Originally songs (or poems) had been produced in every district, and sung or repeated for generations before they were written down. Cash profits did not enter into it. On this basis arose the peaks of art-poetry—the tales of Chaucer, the verse-dramas of Shakespeare, the satires of Dryden and Pope. But the self-confidence of a London which had newly won the leadership of society threw up two generations of authors—satirists, essayists, novelists—who had behind them a more forceful impulse than any other in society and who, as residents in London, could readily take advantage of the growing machinery for the commodity production of printed matter.

As people in the villages and outlying towns became more and more satisfied with the serial fiction sent out from the London presses and libraries, their powers of creating orally their own literature fell into disuse. Robbed of its roots in common life poetry began to decline: even with the Romantics, and certainly with the thin nature-poetry of the Victorians, it is clearly a backwater; the mainstream that carries the freight of social experience is fiction.

Economic and Social Basis

Two final examples—one group of writers and one novel—may complete this account of how fiction grows out of the economic and social basis of human activity. Since the eighteenth century there have been several lulls in the production of first-rate fiction—from Fielding and Richardson to Jane Austen and Scott, and again from these two to the outstanding Victorians. The novels of the early 1800's were almost entirely ruling-class in outlook: Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth wrote as members of landowning families, occupants of the "big house"; Scott wrote from a similar vantage-point but was enabled by his position in a small backward country to remain closer to the peasantry than any bourgeois writer in England, just as, in poetry, the working class is more itself in Burns than in any contemporary English writer.

From 1815 onwards, for a quarter of a century, almost nothing was done in fiction, apart from the growing bulk of pulp. Then in 1837 Dickens started to write fiction, in 1844 Disraeli, in 1847-48 the Brontës, in 1848 Mrs. Gaskell and Thackeray, in 1849 Charles Kingsley, in 1855 Trollope, in 1858 George Eliot. Suddenly the novel has come of age (foreshadowed, it is true, in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*) and can show with the utmost vividness and depth, with an extraordinary union of the most intense individual experience and a sweeping view of the whole of society, the massive community of mankind, with their work, their domestic living, their interlocking but often antagonistic relations together. In 1820 it was poetry, with Wordsworth and Shelley, that was seemingly the most fertile of literary arts. By 1840 poetry was a nearly stagnant backwater, the main current flowed in fiction. What had happened?

The main things that had happened were the huge shifts and transformations in the basis of society which gave us modern life as we know it. In 1790 twice as many people lived in the country as in the town; by 1832 the proportions were reversed. Towns had increased their population on average about three times. The reform movement had made the first inroads in the political monopoly of the aristocracy, and the working people who had been learning politics under bourgeois leadership in the reform campaign had founded their own party, the Chartists. Trade unions had not only become established but had amalgamated, e.g. the Owenite G.N.C.T.U. The "second Industrial Revolution" was taking place, which brought into being heavy metal-working industries and the railway network, and at the same time the most atrocious living conditions for the working people (between 1840 and 1855 emigration doubled).[9]

Arising from all this there was the intense mass stir that culminated in 1848, the year of revolu-

[7] A. S. Collins, *Authorship in the Days of Johnson* (1927), 247–248; Collins, *The Profession of Letters* (1928), 83–84; Chambers, *Memoir of Robert Chambers* (1872), 103–104.

[8] Steen Eiler Rasmussen; *London: The Unique City* (Penguin, 1960), 53–56.

[9] A. L. Morton, *A People's History of England* (1956), 401–403.

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tions, the year of the *Communist Manifesto*. In the reform campaign the bourgeoisie had struggled alongside the working people for the first time since the first stage of the English revolution in the 1640's. And the reflection of this in literature is that group of bourgeois novelists, so suddenly productive in the thirties and forties. They were *all* either radicals or, if Tory, like Disraeli, at least much broader-based than Jane Austen, at least keenly aware that the country was (in Disraeli's own phrase from *Sybil*: 1845) divided into "two nations", exploited and exploiters. And 1848 was precisely the epoch which suddenly and violently made quite militant Socialists out of middle-of-the-road Liberals —George Eliot, John Stuart Mill, Harriet Martineau. So the novel goes with the advance guard of social change. The 1840's saw the approach to maturity of the modern novel. They also saw the first Marxist writings: the *Condition of the Working Class in England in* 1844, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), and the *Manifesto*.

My final example will show how in very recent times the novel has continued to develop by bringing together popular ingredients which had not previously been shaped into refined art. Around 1907, at the heart of what labour historians call the Great Unrest, the period from 1889-1914 that brought the majority of workers into the trade unions, Robert Tressell was writing his *Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. For reasons that Jack Mitchell indicated in the May *Marxism Today*, it may, I think, be called the first work of socialist realism: it is centred in a community of workmen; their work, not their private lives, is the main concern, and active, conscious socialist ideas figure as the driving-force and main impression that we take away with us as the novel ends. But these qualities hardly amount to the lucid and achieved art that Mitchell seems to suggest when he speaks about the unbaring of the class struggle "at its most elemental, subtly-distilled level", the realisation of William Morris's theory "in terms of fully realistic art", the "epic completeness" of Tressell's picture of society. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is not subtle! Characters are valued for us in the crudest possible way by label names such as Crass, Slyme, Belcher, Sweater. Hypocritical religion is hardly treated with "fully realistic art" in that scene where the Rev. Belcher alternately preaches self-denial and belches like a balloon.

In fact Tressell treats the exploiting class and its publicity men with full-blown caricature throughout his novel, and this is only one of the many popular devices that he presses into service. As Mitchell himself points out, the lecture on property which Frank Owen gives in chapter 25 is a close paraphrase of William Morris's 1885 pamphlet, *Useful Work versus Useless Toil*. Whole sections, e.g. Barrington's "Great Oration" that takes up thirty-five pages of chapter 45, are simple retailing of standard nineteenth-century proletarian thought—the economics of William Thompson, Thomas Hodgskin, and Marx, Ruskin and Morris's theories of art and creative labour, and the like.

That was a great age of debate and lecture: Lewis Mumford points out in *The Culture of Cities* that the Victorians talked immensely, and made the public-speaking hall a basic item in their cities, because they were so much better at talking about their problems than at solving them in action.

In Tressell's own time, the popular debate between progressive and reactionary celebrities—Shaw, Wells, and Hilaire Belloc—was a regular entertainment in London and the larger provincial cities. And this goes straight into Tressell's novel. His bourgeois characters are similarly taken over from the technique of the newspaper cartoonist, who makes the enemy's large stomach impossibly gross, his cigar impossibly long, his eyelids unbelievably drooping. In short we see here at the start of socialist realism, as at the start of the modern novel in Fielding's time, a quite new type of work piecing itself together out of all manner of hitherto crude popular ingredients.

This means, of course, that the form is still defective. Tressell's lectures on socialism are bare and laborious, and weak in vivid details of information, compared, say, with Engels's *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, and they are sometimes blatantly grafted on (e.g. "The Great Oration", pp. 515, 542, in the 1955 edition). This element certainly cannot move or awaken us as can the picture of Owen's family hardships, or the pungent colloquial conversations of the workmen with their intuitive scorn of official religion, their jibes at pomposity.

Inevitably Tressell's work is full of defects compared with the matured socialist realism of Sholokhov, for example the masterly way in which, in *Virgin Soil Upturned*, straight socialist material is worked in through the naive, energetic, perfectly lifelike talk of Davidov and Nagulnov, or the highly dramatic part played by Stalin's real article, "Dizzy with Success", in chapter 28. Just as Fielding is obvious and monotonous compared with, say, George Eliot, so Tressell is inferior to later socialist writers—to Lu Hsun, the mature Gorky, Sholokhov, or Fedin—in profundity or consistent sharpness of detail. But Tressell gives us the results of a unique effort to present the utter social truth, bared of all lies and illusions. "This, this, *this* is what life is like for the mass of us"—that is the spirit of his book. And to express it he needed a form that had to be hewed out by dint of his own efforts, without help from traditional literary art.

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Discussion Contributions on

Stages of Social Development

K. G. Hare

ROBIN JARDINE'S article "Stages of Social Development" in *Marxism Today*, July 1961, is interesting in more ways than one. One wonders whether any Marxist, and least of all Marx himself, ever held that the stages of social development follow in a linear progression. No one can seriously hold that one stage automatically follows the next in a manner cut and dried. The very nature of social phenomena precludes such a course of development. In any case, this line looks suspiciously like the inevitable unfolding of divine plans beloved of the bourgeoisie.

The problem in determining both the number and the types of stages in social development is not unlike that of assigning chronological sequence to the types of culture of prehistorical and preliterate societies; and the question at issue is one that will be finally resolved to a large extent on the evidence of archaeology.

Comrade Jardine himself points the way to resolution of this problem by stating in the last few paragraphs of his article that we may have taken a restricted view of the world; and a view confined to not only the western world of modern capitalism but also to the world of historical times.

Engels in *The Origin of the Family, State and Private Property* already draws attention to the considerable importance of the archaeology of his day and its partial rejection by the bourgeoisie of his time, since this evidence supports the Marxist thesis of the stages in the development of society. As so very frequently happens in science, he discovered that many of his conclusions had also been arrived at by someone else (in this case Morgan in his work *Ancient Society*).

Both these adduce support for such stages archaeologically. Professor Gordon Childe in more recent times advanced stronger support for the Marxist thesis. In his work *Social Evolution* Professor Childe outlined what had been, in fact, his life's work, namely, to assign to the broad categories of archaeology, Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages the social organisation of the various cultures found within these stages of social development. Using the archaeological evidence, admittedly sketchy in places, Professor Childe looked for evidence that suggested the existence of, say, social stratification in preliterate societies. Thus in the Minoan culture we find evidence suggestive of, at least, two types of burial, one type few in numbers and rich in grave goods etc., and the other many in number and less rich in grave goods. Both types of burial are identified as belonging to a common culture by the presence of such artifacts as pottery which clearly identifies, in a conventional manner, the culture.

Again, the impressive evidence of the riverine cultures of Assyria and Egypt clearly points to some form of social stratification. In the case of Assyria this is well documented. Indeed, one of the most interesting and, for this discussion, most pertinent features of this early evidence for the sociological analysis of Mesopotamia is the discovery of evidence for the existence of war at quite a late date, at a higher level of geological stratification, and at a level which attests to the emergence of some considerable economic activity.

Childe, following Morgan and Engels, relates the archaeological evidence to the three stages of Savagery, Barbarism and Civilisation, and lays down the successive steps passed through on the road to civilisation in contrasted natural environments. He goes to some considerable length to show that this transition from one stage to another is not the same process at the same time in every case. Indeed, it is an archaeological truism that while we in Europe, Soviet Asia and North America are at an advanced Iron Age, the Australian aborigines are at a supposedly Palaeolithic Age.

Comrade Jardine is aware, as he makes quite plain, of the need to push Marxist social theory further back than to historical limits, and to map out, where we can, the evolutionary outlines of human society in some such way as a palaeo-anatomist attempts to trace and to account for modern skeletal formations. I am surprised, therefore, that he fails to mention Engels' work to which I have earlier alluded, especially since Engels says in the Preface to the first edition (1884): "It was no less a person than Karl Marx who had planned to present the results of Morgan's researches in connection with the conclusions arrived at by his own . . . materialist investigation of history and thus to make clear their whole significance." This clearly

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can mean only that Marx was fully aware of the archaeological evidence and the stages put forward by Morgan and Engels.

Comrade Jardine could do well to dwell on Marx's words "in broad outlines . . .", in the quotation he would have us consider further, and on the words "Mankind as a whole" in the more recent statement in the text-book *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*. Whilst discounting any charges of sounding Talmudic, I think these reservations are of a fundamental importance.

Most of us would agree with modern bourgeois sociologists who talk of different types of theory. There are big sweeping theories like Darwinism and possibly Relativity, and there are smaller and much less ambitious theories, which are more empirical, nearer to the raw data, and usually put forward to explain only a segment, or a small part of the data. They are rather working hypotheses. Marxism is more, I think, a theory of the first kind. It is like Darwinism in that it does not set out to describe the evolutionary changes of single entities, be they social or biological, but rather to explain the trends and tendencies of large social groups, societies, and ultimately of human society itself. In a similar way Darwinism does not attempt to explain the evolution of single biological specimens but rather the genus and ultimately the whole organic world.

If this is so we need not be surprised if we fail sometimes to find an exact identity of forms between Marxist social theory and a particular country. The point is, assuming Professor Goodrich is correct, even if in China slavery was never the predominant form of production it existed and preceded feudalism. As Dr. Needham says, quoted by Comrade Jardine, feudalism emerged after the coalition of the warring states. I may be accused of casuistry, but may not the separate states themselves show the stages of social development if one wishes to apply the process of social development in a seemingly rigid fashion?

My own feeling is that an examination of the evidence from preliterate societies will go a long way to prove, if proof is needed, the Marxist theses of at least the earlier stages—primitive-communal, slave and feudal; for the last stages of capitalism and the present transitional stages we need look no further than our own times.

Social Service Statistics

Kitty Cornforth

IT seems to me that the note on social service statistics in the October *Marxism Today* was in some ways misleading. All the supporters of the Common Market are busy telling us that it is a mistake to suppose that social services in Britain are better than in the Six, because benefits regarded as a percentage of wages are higher in the Six than they are here. The note gave figures which support this view. But it did not explain that the figures in question referred to a particular case, a married iron and steel worker with two dependent children.

To generalise these figures is misleading because benefits in Britain, apart from graduated old age pensions, are paid at a flat rate plus dependants' allowances, whereas in the Six they are, by various methods, related to individual earnings. Consequently, though in the case quoted benefits amount to a higher percentage of earnings than in Britain, in the case of a lower paid worker British benefits, being on a flat rate, would compare more favourably.

The comment was made that the United Kingdom was handsomely beaten by low standard Italy in respect of sickness benefit, 34 per cent of wages for the British worker and 47.5 per cent for the Italian. But in the example taken the British iron and steel worker earned £15 per week compared with just under £42 per month for the Italian. For a British worker earning £10 10s. a week the flat rate sickness benefit plus dependant's allowances would work out at 57 per cent of earnings, i.e., better than Italy.

Other Aspects

It is also important to note other aspects of the question.

First: In the Six, workers' contributions, as well as benefits, are related to earnings. In the example

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quoted the West German worker got higher benefits as a percentage of wages than the British worker, i.e., unemployment 51.8 per cent compared with 36.7 per cent and sickness 70.5 per cent compared with 34 per cent. But it should be noted that he would pay nearly twice as much in contributions, namely about £6 2s. per month compared with 15s. 8d. per week for the British worker, allowing for the graduated contribution for old age pension.

The Tories would have no objection to higher benefits here, provided that the worker paid for them through higher contributions.

Taxation

Second: In Britain a much greater proportion of the cost of the social services comes from the state, out of taxation, while in the Six much less comes from the state and much more directly from employers' contributions based on a percentage of wages.

It is important that the effect of this should be investigated. While taxation, to some extent at any rate, comes from the resources of the rich, from rent interest and profit, how far do employers recoup their direct contributions at the expense of the workers? It is significant that all comparisons of labour costs in the Six take the employers' social security contributions into consideration.

Correction

In my article on "Trade Unions and Coloured Workers" (*Marxism Today*, September, p. 282) I referred to Deptford Labour Party as among those who had put forward policies favouring a restriction of immigration. My attention has been called to the fact that this is not so, and in apologising for the error, I give below the terms of the resolution adopted by the Deptford Labour Party at the meeting of its General Management Committee on September 21st, 1961:

> This G.M.C. affirms that Britain should not abandon its traditional policy of allowing immigrants from British territories overseas to enter freely into the United Kingdom, and it therefore rejects the view being expressed in some quarters that some form of restriction is now essential; the only useful and effective measures in the present situation would be:
>
> (a) To put pressure on the government to give housing in this country a much higher degree of priority and for the fullest use to be made of the existing housing legislation.
>
> (b) To seek ways of assisting the building up of a strong social and financial structure wherever necessary in our overseas territories.
>
> (c) Through the formation of groups of citizens from all sections of the community, including the immigrants themselves, who would endeavour to create among their fellow-citizens a mood of tolerance and understanding.

BILL PINDER

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U. all depts.) Aldenham, Herts.

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